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Dick Allen: You Can Go Home Again

Auto Racing Wives Are Allowed to Cry–Once

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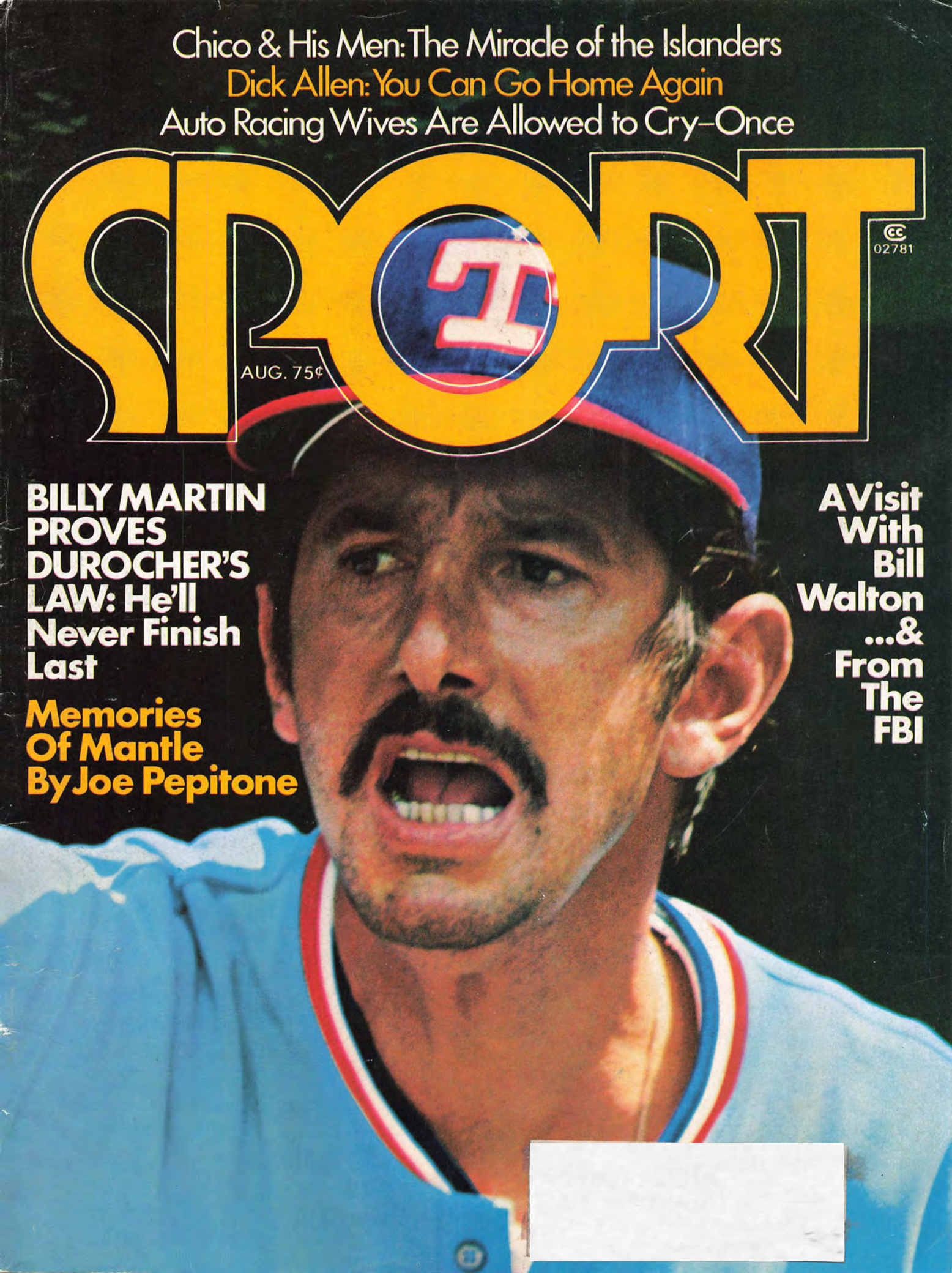

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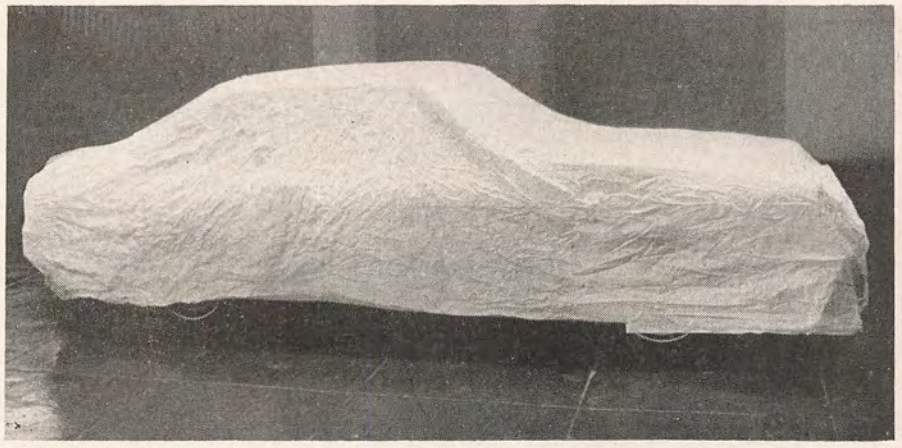

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SPORT

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COVER CREDIT

Billy Martin CARL SKALAK JR.

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AUG. THIS MONTH IN SPORT

When Ralph Barbieri dropped a note to SPORT a few months ago, explaining that he had just returned from a visit with Bill Walton and that he would like to write about the experience, our reaction was politely negative: *We'd be happy to read your manuscript, but it's a long shot . . . but . . . but . . .* Unsolicited manuscripts from unknown writers generally have about as much chance of succeeding as a Little League hitter against Nolan Ryan.

Barbieri insisted upon taking a swing, anyway, and the result is "A Visit With Bill Walton—And From the FBI," one of the lengthiest stories ever to appear in SPORT and an insightful account of Barbieri's stay at the Walton home.

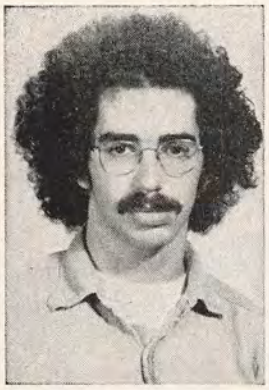
Barbieri went into the story, and into the home, with few preconceptions, and the material he collected may alter other people's preconceptions about Walton. Barbieri's own background could not be more Establishment: A master's degree in marketing from the Wharton School of Finance, a year and a half as an account executive at a major advertising firm in New York and a stretch as an executive recruiter in San Francisco. The one hint of rebellion in his past is that, almost 20 years ago, he skipped the regional finals of a national spelling bee to attend the first major-league baseball game played on the West Coast. "The Giants and Ruben Gomez shut out the Dodgers, 8-0, at Seals Stadium," Barbieri recalls. "My choice left my seventh-grade nun in a state beyond consolation."

James Kunen, who, like Barbieri, is making his first appearance in SPORT this month, has considerably more publishing experience. When he was 19 and a sophomore at Columbia University, he wrote *The Strawberry Statement*, an account of student unrest that was later turned into a movie. Kunen is now a columnist for *New Times* magazine—not bad for a 26-year-old.

When he was growing up in Massachusetts, Kunen was a Boston Red Sox fan, and his heroes were Ted Williams and Jimmy Piersall. In assigning him to write this month's cover story on the manager of the Texas Rangers, we sent Kunen out a few years too late to meet Ted Williams, but he did bump into Piersall, now a Ranger aide.

The co-author, with Joe Pepitone, of "I Remember Mickey," is Berry Stainback, who was, in the late 1960s, managing editor of SPORT. Since his departure, he has worked for *Life*, *New Times* and *True*. The Pepitone-Stainback book, *Joe, You Coulda Made Us Proud*, is in the bookstores now.

Dick Schaap



Kunen

Stainback

Barbieri

SPORT

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LETTERS TO SPORT

MATTER OF OPINION

In your May article about Cleveland Cavaliers center Jim Chones ("Coming of Age in Cleveland"), Atlanta guard Dean Meminger states, "Except for Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Jim Chones has more offensive moves than any other center in pro ball." The NBA's Most Valuable Player, Bob McAdoo, has more offensive moves than Chones and Abdul-Jabbar combined.

Dale Wetzel
Springfield, Mo.

Ed. You may be right.

MATTERS OF FACT

I believe there was a mistake in the usually reliable column, "Inside Facts" (June). It said that Sonny Randle was one of six American League hitters under 30 to hit .300 last year. If I'm not mistaken, I think that Mr. Roth has confused Len Randle of the Rangers for Sonny Randle, the great receiver for the St. Louis Football Cardinals during the '60s.

Mike Zeffren
St. Louis, Mo.

In your article in the June issue on "Old Men of the Mound," you have a pitcher in a California Angel uniform on page 96 that you identify as Jim Perry, and on page 99, you have a picture of a pitcher in a Minnesota Twins uniform that you say is Hoyt Wilhelm. I have been a baseball fan for many years and I know that Jim Perry was never a California Angel and that Hoyt Wilhelm was never a Minnesota Twin. Is it possible that the two pictures might have been switched?

Gordon Paffrath, Jr.
Owatonna, Minn.

Ed. It's not only possible; it's probable.

Letters To SPORT
641 Lexington Ave
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DIDN'T YOU USED TO BE...

AN AUTO RACER'S WIFE?

EVI AND DAN GURNEY

When Dan Gurney retired from auto racing in 1970, after 15 years of competition and one year of marriage, no one was happier than his wife, Evi Butz Gurney. "I was petrified when he was driving," she says. "It was a tremendous relief when he retired. By the time I married Dan in 1969, I had seen many drivers die and attended many funerals."

Gurney was one of the finest Grand Prix drivers in the world, the winner of four different GP championship races, the most any American has won. In 1967, in the Belgian Grand Prix, he became only the second American ever to win a European Formula One race in an American car. That same year, he and A. J. Foyt teamed up to win the most prestigious endurance race in the world, the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

In 1966, Gurney had begun building cars as well as racing them, and in 1970, he decided to devote fulltime to building and perfecting his Eagles (which have since won three times at Indianapolis). His wife applauded the decision.

Unlike Betty Rutherford and Sandee Kunze (see page 59), Evi Butz Gurney was involved in racing long before she met her husband. German-born, Evi worked in Porsche's European publicity department, and she can discuss racing eloquently and knowledgeably. "Sometimes I think my background is a disadvantage," she says. "If a wife lacks my racing experience, she'll certainly be less concerned about what her husband does for a living. The more you know about racing, the more you know about what can happen out on that track."

Now that both she and Dan are off the circuit, Evi enjoys her life as housemaker, freelance racing writer and mother of two boys, four-year-old Justin and 11-month-old Alexander.

Does she miss the old GP circuit?

"No, not really," she says. "It was something I am very glad I experienced and I'd be a liar if I said it wasn't exciting. There is a lot of fun and you meet a lot of people but it is emotionally very difficult. You pay for it with your heart. When you retire, you have less glamour but much more peace of mind."

—Tom Murray

INSIDE FACTS

BY LARRY GRUBMAN

Since 1960, 39 "expansion" teams have entered existing major leagues in the four prime sports of football, baseball, basketball and hockey, and very few of the 39 have progressed so rapidly or so impressively as hockey's New York Islanders (see page 66), who, between their first season and their third, almost tripled their number of victories (from 12 in 1972-73 to 33 in 1974-75). . . . But even the Islanders didn't improve so dramatically as basketball's Milwaukee Bucks, who soared from 27-55 their first year to 56-26 their second, thanks largely to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

The first of the post-1960 expansion teams was the Dallas Cowboys, and in their initial NFL season, they had an 0-11-1 record. . . . Coincidentally, every NFL and AFL expansion team since the Cowboys has finished its first season with a 3-11 mark. . . . Of the six NFL/AFL additions since 1960, only one—Atlanta—avoided last place in its first season. . . . But two of the late-comers—Miami and Minnesota—have wound up in three Super Bowls apiece, and one—Dallas—has made the Super Bowl twice. . . . Only one of the post-1960 football teams has never had a winning season—New Orleans (in eight years).

Among baseball's eight expansion teams—Houston, Montreal, the Mets, San Diego, California, Kansas City Royals, Washington-Texas and Seattle-Milwaukee—only the Mets have managed to get into a championship playoff or a World Series. . . . The Mets won the Series in 1969, lost it in 1973. . . . Of the other seven teams, only Montreal, San Diego and Seattle-Milwaukee have not yet enjoyed any winning seasons (in six years each of trying).

Among basketball's 11 expansion teams, only Milwaukee in the NBA has ever won a league championship; the ABA's only expansion team, San Diego, has never had even a .500 season (in three years). . . . Among hockey's 14 expansion teams, only Philadelphia in the NHL has won a league championship, but Phoenix, one of the WHA's two expansion teams, has the distinction of being the only post-1960 team in any of the four sports to achieve a winning record in its first season. . . . Phoenix had a .551 mark in 1974-75.

Amazingly, since 1960, despite the horrendous records of such teams as the San Diego Padres, the San Diego Conquistadors and hockey's Washington Capitals, all the 39 expansion teams have a combined won-lost percentage of .465 . . . remarkable, considering that all the teams in existence before 1960 won, of course, only 50 percent of the time.

THE SPORT QUIZ!

GRADE YOURSELF
14-16 EXCELLENT
11-13 VERY GOOD
8-10 FAIR

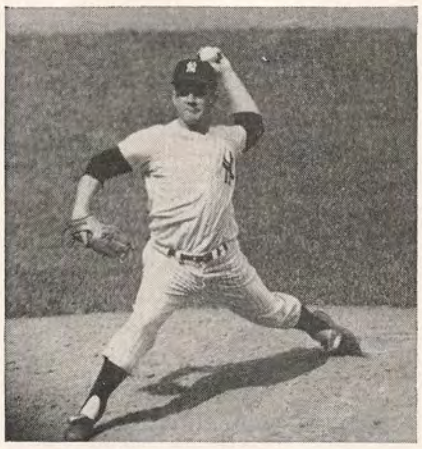
Yogi Berra

1. Which one of these pitchers did not no-hit the Yankees between 1949 and 1964?
a. Hoyt Wilhelm
b. Jim Bunning
c. Virgil Trucks

2. Which one of these men did not manage a Yankee pennant winner between 1949 and 1964?
a. Ralph Houk
b. Yogi Berra
c. Johnny Keane

3. Which one of these former Yankees did not play for a Japanese baseball team?
a. Joe Pepitone
b. Hector Lopez
c. Clete Boyer

4. Which one of these non-Yankee MVP winners between 1949 and 1964 was originally a Yankee?



Whitey Ford

a. Jackie Jensen
b. Al Rosen
c. Nellie Fox

5. Which one of these Yankee infielders did not win the A.L. Rookie-of-the-Year award?
a. Gil McDougald
b. Tony Kubek
c. Billy Martin

6. Which one of these men pitched for the Yankees, Dodgers and Giants between 1949 and 1964?
a. Sal Maglie
b. Don Larsen
c. Al Downing

7. Match these World Series highlights with the date on which each occurred.

Larsen's perfect game	Oct. 8, 1960
Ford breaks Ruth's scoreless-inning streak	Oct. 8, 1961
Richardson's record six RBIs	Oct. 8, 1956

8. Which one of these awards did not go to a Yankee in 1961?
a. Rookie of the Year
b. Most Valuable Player
c. Cy Young

9. Which one of these men played for the Yankees in 1964 and against them in 1975?
a. Stan Bahnsen
b. Mike Hegan
c. Bill Robinson

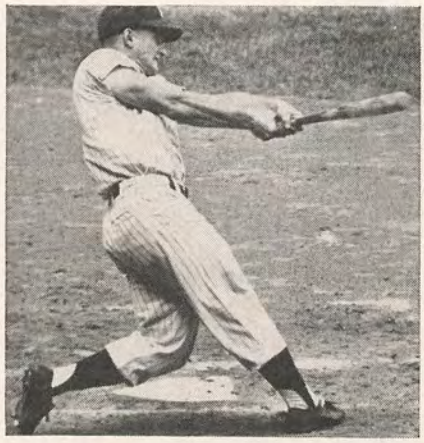
10. Which one of these players was not traded from the Yankees in the Roger Maris deal?
a. Hank Bauer
b. Norm Siebern
c. Jerry Lumpe

11. Between 1949 and 1964 which one of these Yankee pitchers did not lead the A.L. in saves?
a. Ryne Duren
b. Bobby Shantz
c. Joe Page

12. Which one of these A.L. managers never caught for the Yankees?
a. Darrell Johnson
b. Ralph Houk
c. Del Crandall

13. Which one of these men played only for the Yankees during his major league career?
a. Yogi Berra
b. Whitey Ford
c. Roger Maris

14. When was the last time baseball's All-Star Game was played in Yankee Stadium?
a. 1960
b. 1964
c. 1949



Roger Maris

15. True or False. Mickey Mantle's 52 home runs in 1956 were the most ever hit by a player to win the Triple Crown.

16. Which one of these Yankee catchers once hit four consecutive home runs?
a. Elston Howard
b. John Blanchard
c. Charlie Silvera

FOR ANSWERS TURN TO PAGE 64

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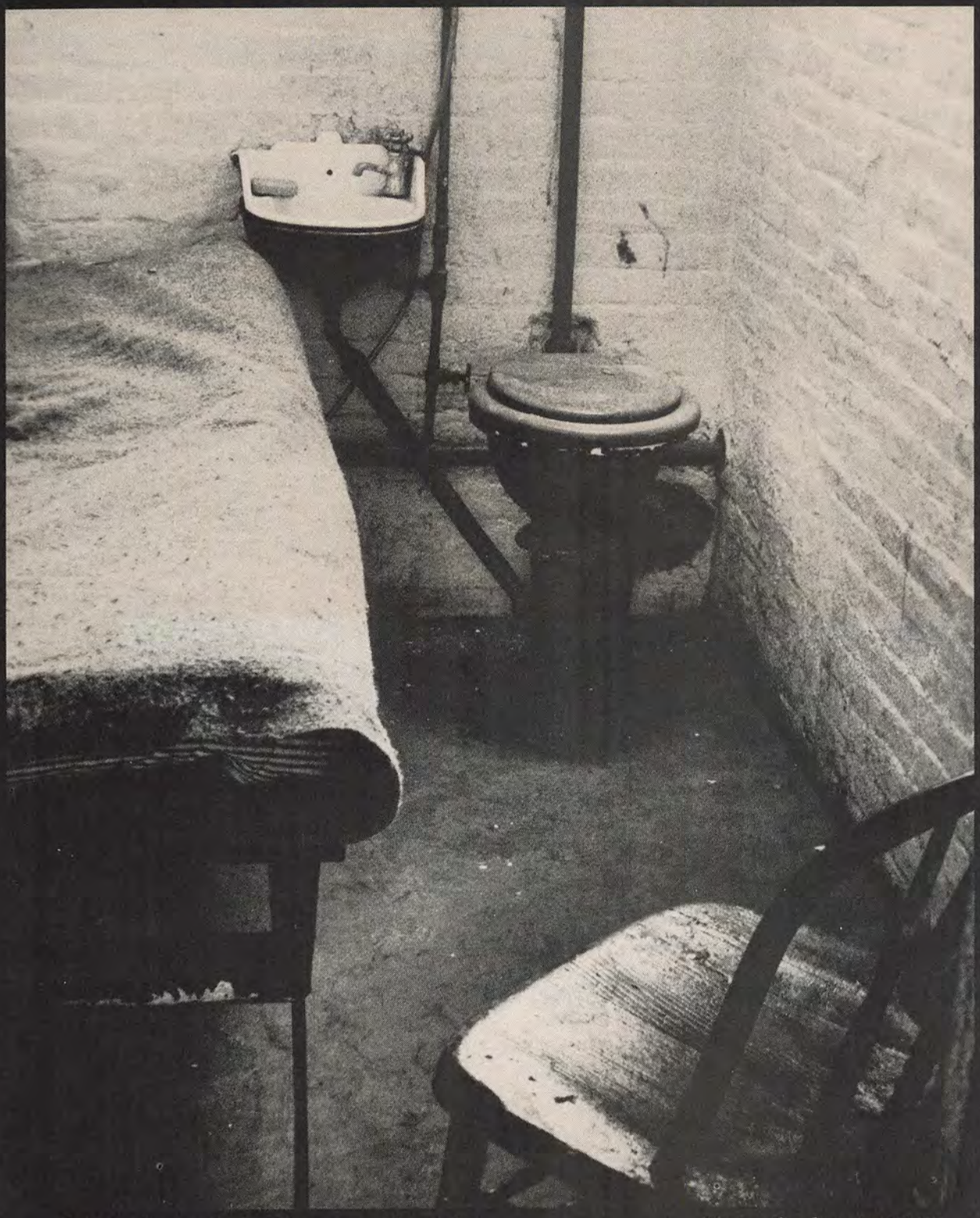

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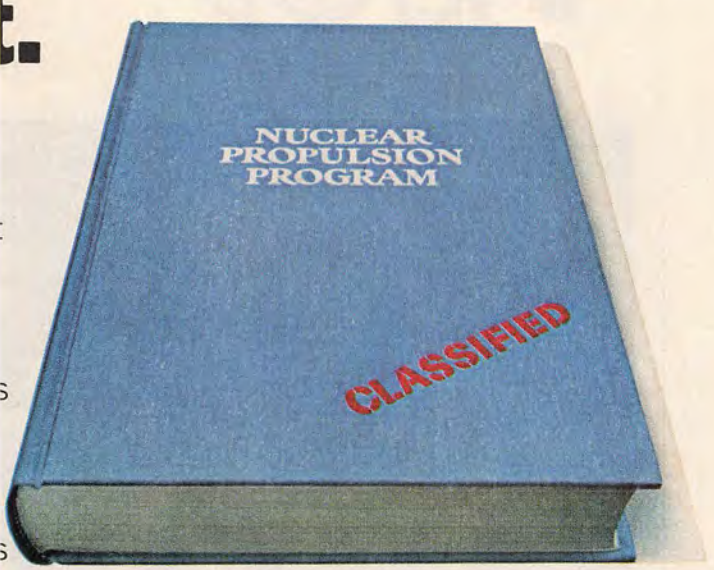

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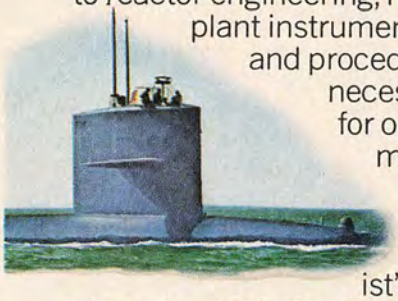

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SPORT TALK

BY DICK SCHAAP

THREE STARS, THREE CARS

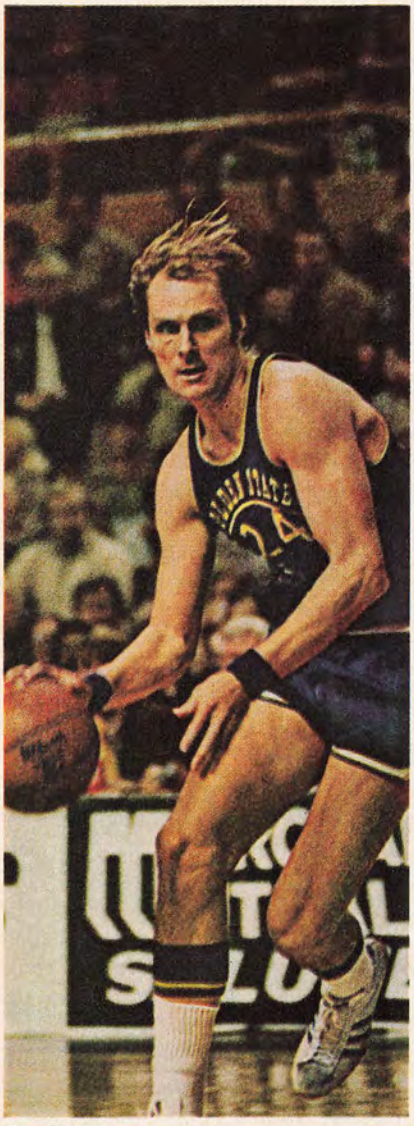
A seven-foot-two skin diver, a six-foot-seven tennis player and a French-Canadian fisherman won SPORT's Most Valuable Player awards for the 1975 American Basketball Association, National Basketball Association and National Hockey League playoffs—and no one seriously disputed the choices. Only a shark would have the nerve to argue with a seven-foot-two skin diver.

The skin diver is Artis Gilmore of the Kentucky Colonels, owner of the world's largest wet suit; the tennis player is Rick Barry of the Golden State Warriors, owner of one of the world's biggest tennis serves; and the fisherman is Bernie Parent of the Philadelphia Flyers, who fishes with a pole because he hates to see anything go into a net.

The three rich men (their combined salaries come to almost $750,000 a year) richly deserved their awards. In the ABA finals, Gilmore led Kentucky to a 4-1 victory over Indiana; he averaged 25 points and 21 rebounds a game. In the NBA finals, Barry led Golden State to a 4-0 sweep against Washington; he paced his team in scoring (29.5 points a game), in assists (five a game) and in steals (three a game). In the NHL finals, Parent led Philadelphia to a 4-2 victory over Buffalo; he allowed only three goals in the Flyers' four victories.

All three MVPs gathered at a luncheon at New York's Plaza Hotel recently to receive their prizes: Handsomely-framed color photos of themselves in action, MVP rings from the American Motors Corporation and an American Motors passenger car for each. For Barry and Gilmore, each enjoying his first championshp season, it was their first MVP awards; for Parent, it was his second SPORT MVP award in a row. The only previous winners of two consecutive SPORT MVP awards were football players: The new coach of the Green Bay Packers (Bart Starr) and the old quarterback of the Baltimore Colts (Johnny Unitas). Sandy Koufax and Bob Gibson, in baseball, and Willis Reed, in basketball, twice were named MVPs, but not in consecutive years.

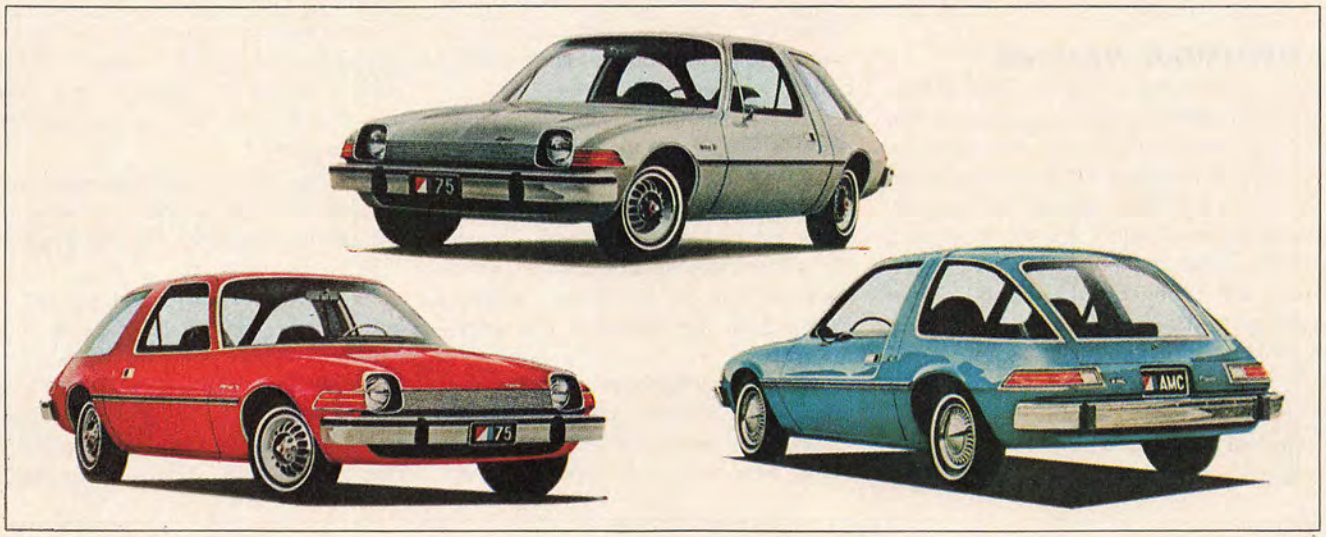
Rick Barry, Bernie Parent and Artis Gilmore got the awards, but Billy Crystal (left) and Gene Shalit got the laughs.



Rick Barry
Golden State Warriors

Bernie Parent
Philadelphia Flyers

Artis Gilmore
Kentucky Colonels



At the luncheon, Jerry Perenchio, the man who promoted the King-Riggs tennis match and the first Ali-Frazier fight, offered a $1 million winner-take-all guarantee for a best of three series in Las Vegas between the Kentucky Colonels and the Golden State Warriors; the NBA showed no interest in picking up the challenge, although Gilmore and Barry both seemed willing to go one-on-one for the million. Gene Shalit, the mustachioed movie critic, "Today Show" star and contributing editor of SPORT, read telegrams from the mayor of Louisville to Gilmore and from the mayor of Philadelphia to Parent, then explained that there was no telegram from the mayor of Oakland to Barry because no one would admit to being mayor of Oakland. And Billy Crystal, a gifted young comedian who offered an hilarious imitation of the Cosell-Ali dialogue at SPORT's Man of the Year dinner for Muhammad Ali, shifted to basketball and aimed his wit at Barry, at Gilmore and at referee Mendy Rudolph. Crystal apologized to Parent for not having a hockey routine.

When the luncheon broke up, Gilmore took off for the Bahamas, to attend an ABA players meeting and get in a little skin diving; Barry took off for Las Vegas, to defend his title in the Dewars sports celebrity tennis tournament; and Parent took off for New Jersey, to join his father for some fishing. All three had three months to savor their honors—and then back to training camp.

MYSTERIOUS MARTINEZ

Barring a strike or another form of National (Football League) disaster, training camps are now opening all around the NFL, and hundreds of eager rookies are showing off their special skills—speed, strength and agility, for the most part. One rookie is showing off a very special skill: Experience. His name is Roger Martinez (Herrera), and he is the aldest rookie in pro football. He's 34.

If Martinez' age sounds implausible for an NFL rookie, the rest of his background sounds impossible. A former soccer, jai-alai and chess player in his native Argentina, Martinez is five-foot-nine and weighs 185 pounds. He has an IQ, reportedly, to match his weight, he has a degree in mechanical engineering, he speaks five languages fluently and he designs electrical and irrigational systems for golf courses. His designing is done for Golden Bear Enterprises, the Jack Nicklaus firm, and, supposedly when Martinez was an assistant pro at Florida's Lost Tree Golf Course, he once won a nine-hole match from Nicklaus.

Martinez is a place-kicker, obviously, and through his friendship with Nicklaus, he got a tryout last March with another Nicklaus friend, Miami coach Don Shula. Martinez stood on the Dolphins' practice field and calmly kicked 20 of 20 field goals from the 35-yard line, 18 of 20 from the 50. Which earned him a shot, in training camp, at Garo Yepremian's job.

Not surprisingly, Martinez approaches place-kicking as a science. "It's a lot like golf," he says. "The foot, or club, must be square on impact. I have 15 different ways to kick a ball and five different spins."

Martinez hopes to unveil a secret kicking weapon this year. "Maybe the other teams should not know about this," says the former RCA computer expert and father of two. "I am working on a kickoff maneuver where I can put a spin on the ball . . . it bounces . . . bumpa-da-bumpa-da-bump . . . ten yards . . . and I recover it . . . in less than two seconds."

Once, when a Martinez kick was blocked in a tryout session, he explained his failure in his own terms: "The trajectory and aerodynamic path of the volumetric spheroid were abnormally low." In other words, he didn't get the ball up high enough.

One warning about Mysterious Martinez: He was brought to the attention of SPORT by a man named Bob Cooke, who used to be sports editor and sportswriter for the New York *Herald Tribune*. Cooke was on the staff of the *Tribune* when a few of his fellow reporters dreamed up the Johnny Chung story—the tale of a Chinese halfback who played for Plainfield State Teachers and scored touchdowns by the dozens. Chung was written up first in the *Tribune*, then around the country, a national hero until it was discovered that he was purely the figment of some sportswriters' imagination.

Roger Martinez is real. He exists. Now all he has to do is prove that he can kick, long and straight, under pressure.

PUZZLING PERONE

Even if Martinez makes it with the Miami Dolphins, he will not be the oldest rookie in the history of professional sports, not even the oldest in the past year.

A year ago, the San Diego Padres signed a five-foot-eight, 165-pound shortstop who was, they thought, 21 years old. His name was Rocky Perone, and he was assigned to the Padres' rookie league team in Walla Walla, Wash. Perone played one game for Walla Walla, got a hit and a stolen base and, after the game, was approached by the manager of the opposing Lewiston team, Bobby Hofmann, a former major league infielder.

"Don't I know you from somewhere?" said Hofmann.

"No, sir," said Perone.

"How old are you?" said Hofmann. "You gotta be 25."

"OK," said Perone. "I'm 25."

Actually, Perone was 35, and, actually 13 years earlier, he had played on a minor-league team in Daytona Beach, Fla., a team managed by Bobby Hofmann.

Two days later, Walla Walla released the "21-year-old" shortstop. "He conned us," says Mike Port, San Diego's administrator of minor-league personnel. "We could see the first day of camp that something didn't add up. His reactions and movement were poor. But we didn't suspect he'd lied about his age. He didn't have a chance of making it, but since he'd driven all the way up there, we let him in a game.

"The day before he left, his roommate happened to get a look at his driver's license and saw that he was born in 1938."

Perone was disappointed by his release, but he hasn't quite given up. "I'm working on a knuckleball," he says at his California home. "There isn't a catcher in San Clemente who can handle my knuckleball. Do you know of any club that needs a good relief pitcher?"

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SPORTING LIFE

When a pair of defensive linemen decide to tackle an 8,000-mile trip through Central America, most of it by motorcycle, they shake up the countryside—the same way they like to shake up quarterbacks.

WITH BEN DAVIDSON & TOM KEATING

If Emiliano Zapata himself had walked into the small Mexican restaurant in a remote section of the Yucatan, the Mayans sitting down to supper could not have been more startled. Mayans, long isolated from civilization, are small, dark-skinned people, the men rarely taller than five-foot-five or five-six, the women even shorter, and they are not accustomed to seeing anyone like the man squeezing through the doorway. He was a gringo, obviously, but he was the biggest gringo any of the locals had ever seen, six-foot-eight, more than 275 pounds, with a flowing mustache and a friendly smile. It was *Kaliman*, some of the Mayans decided, it had to be *Kaliman, El Hombre Incredible*, the hero of a Mexican comic strip and radio serial.

Actually, it was Ben Davidson, once *El Hombre Terrible* of the American Football League, the scourge of Joe Namath, and with Davidson was his former Super Bowl teammate on the Oakland Raiders, Tom Keating, the two of them off on their annual motorcycle

trip, this time spending five weeks early in 1975 roaring through Mexico, Guatemala and Belize.

In fluent Spanish, Davidson told the Mayans that he and his friend were simply touring Americans, searching only for a meal and a wash basin to scrub off some of their grime. After they washed, Davidson and Keating sat down to a couple of bottles of Montejo beer, and Davidson showed off his limited knowledge of Mayan. "*Bahoosh*?" he said—"How much?" in the ancient language.

In earlier days, Spaniards had invaded Mexico in search of gold, Texans in search of land and New Yorkers in search of quick divorces, but Davidson and Keating were looking only for laughs and a few fresh sights.

They had started off in San Francisco —still their home, even though Keating spent the 1974 season with Kansas City and Davidson with Portland in the World Football League—and had traveled by train to Guadalajara. Then they had jumped on their motorcycles and had headed first for Mexico City, then for the limestone roads of the Yucatan.

At the start of the 8,000-mile jaunt—more than 5,000 miles of it by motorcycle —Davidson and Keating were accompanied by seven friends and relatives, but by the end, only one was still with them. The trip was only for the hardy. "As pro football players," says Keating, "we're used to discomfort. We play and practice in wind and rain and sometimes even in snow. We don't think anything about it. But the average guy, who gets up each day in a heated house and gets breakfast fixed to order, isn't used to it."

Davidson and Keating could have afforded a comfortable tour of Central America—well, at least Keating could have; Davidson was still waiting for some of his WFL paychecks—but they chose to rough it. Most nights, they slept on the side of the road and bathed in rivers. When rain drove them indoors, the accommodations often got worse instead of better. One night, they slept in a grease rack at a gas station; another night, on a cutting table in a sawmill. On only four occasions did they turn soft and retreat to hotel rooms.

Their traveling companions found that the rustic life looked better from a distance. The first two days of riding, on a back road from Guadalajara to Mexico City, cut the group nearly in half. "We drove through stretches of mud," says Keating, "and we got covered with it. The first night, you never heard so much moaning. Then the next day, we got lost. I asked a guy for directions, and all he wanted to do was sell me some marijuana."

Four riders gave up in Mexico City, a fifth left to return to work a few days later and a sixth crashed his bike in Oaxaca and headed home. Davidson and Keating pressed on, pausing every now and then to explain to curious Mexicans that they were "football players," a revelation which amused the natives who call soccer players "football players" and had never seen soccer players so large. After a while, Davidson and Keating dropped the football bit and identified themselves as "professional sportsmen."

Local officials in the three countries they visited had not heard of Davidson or Keating or the Oakland Raiders, so they did not get the sort of special treatment professional athletes grow accustomed to in the U.S. They didn't mind that; what they did mind was *unfair* treatment. Right from the start, Davidson and Keating decided they wouldn't pay "*la mordita*," the little bribe that is

As they roared through Central America on their Hondas, Ben Davidson and Tom Keating made friends with natives (and a snake) and enemies of border officials.

SPORTING LIFE CONTINUED

practically a national pastime with the border officials in most sections of Central America.

When Davidson and Keating reached the Mexico-Guatemala border, for instance, it was 15 minutes after noon—15 minutes into the traditional siesta time of noon till two. An official told the two oversized tourists that they'd have to pay an extra two-dollar fee for disturbing the siesta. Davidson and Keating refused; they said they'd economize and wait until the siesta was over and then cross the border.

The border official was furious. "What really got him mad," says Davidson, "is that we sat around and told everyone else who came by that they wouldn't have to pay if they waited. We probably cost the guy between forty and fifty dollars."

At the Belize border, an official said that Davidson couldn't cross because he had a beard. Davidson offered several logical reasons why he could cross; then he backed the official up against a fence post. The last argument won. The reluctant official referred the matter to his superior who ruled that the bearded giant could cross. "Sticking a finger in a guy's chest helped us avoid some bribes," Keating says. "Another thing that worked was asking for the guy's name and writing it down. All this stuff is one guy's hustle; he never wants his boss to learn about it."

Despite corrupt officials, an occasional snake for a roadside companion and some strange meals in strange places, Keating and Davidson thoroughly enjoyed their journey, so much so that next year they plan to take a longer one, within the U.S., visiting historic Bicentennial sites. They also won a convert to their traveling style—Dick Wiseman, the only friend to survive the entire trip. "Wiseman has sold his car and got a cheaper one, and has moved into a smaller apartment just so he can save enough money for another trip," says Keating. "We've ruined him."

—GLENN DICKEY

Long before they were roughing it in Central America, Ben Davidson and Tom Keating were roughing up Joe Namath.

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PAUL HEMPHILL'S AMERICA

Babe McCarthy died early one morning last spring, only hours after being inducted into the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame for his successes as head basketball coach at Mississippi State University during the late '50s and early '60s. He had been hanging on at his sister's home in Baldwyn, Miss., all doped-up and hurting from cancer, and it had been a matter of time for nearly a year. About 400 people came for the burial service, a nice mix of executives in dark suits and ex-athletes in slacks and red-faced loggers in overalls; and the true friends and believers were the sort who would head afterwards to a truck stop on the edge of town to drink beer and tell stories about Babe.

Born and raised in the piney woods of northeastern Mississippi, never big enough or talented enough to be much of an athlete himself, Babe spent most of his 51 years getting by on country charm and tenacity. He was too small to play in college, but in 1955, after he made a reputation as a winning coach in high school, he was named head basketball coach at Mississippi State. It was a time when people in the Deep South hardly knew what you do with a basketball. During the next decade—only occasionally having such a star as Bailey Howell, most of the time going with stringy Mississippi country boys who made it on conditioning and guts—Babe McCarthy broke the domination of Southeastern Conference basketball by Kentucky's Adolph Rupp by winning or sharing four championships.

Babe's favorite day of each year was when Kentucky came to play his Bulldogs in the crowded little gym in Starkville. One time a dead skunk mysteriously wound up under Rupp's seat on the bench. Another time the Wildcats were flustered when nearly all of the 4,500 fans brought cowbells to the game (leading to an anti-cowbell rule in the SEC which still stands). Another time Kentucky placed a black wreath on Mississippi State's dressing-room door after a win, but Babe saved it and nailed it to Kentucky's door the next year when State won in Lexington. Last season, when State hosted Kentucky in the last game to be played in the little gym—a glistening new 10,000-seat coliseum will be ready for the 1975-76 season—Adolph Rupp came good-naturedly as a special guest; recognition, more or less, of what the gym and Babe had meant to basketball in the South.

Abruptly, in that muggy dark corner of America where football was always a way of life, basketball has become a major sport. I am not talking about the mountainous areas of the South such as Kentucky and North Carolina, but about rural Alabama and even the lake country of central Florida. "The day the first black kid was allowed to play on what had been an all-white high school team," says Georgia athletic director Joel Eaves, himself a winning coach at Auburn in the early '60s, "is the day basketball got turned around in America. Now the Big Ten and the others come and try to sign *our* boys." Indeed, nearly every school in the SEC now boasts a new coliseum seating upwards of 10,000. Most of the players are home-grown, rather than Kentucky or Indiana imports, and several SEC teams have fielded all-black lineups recently. SEC teams are making the top ten nationally, and Southern boys are going high in the pro drafts.

Babe McCarthy was the first to break Kentucky's traditional hold on Deep South basketball, but others played important parts. Eaves, at Auburn, was one: Using average boys from rural Georgia and Alabama, running a methodical and disciplined offense called the "Auburn Shuffle," he beat Kentucky at Auburn's converted Quonset gym for the title in 1960. Another was Alabama's Johnny Dee, who brought in eight players from all over the country ("the Rocket Eight") and made them the first team ever to score 100 points on Kentucky; he set it up the year before by staging a pre-game brawl to "show my boys that Wildcats bleed just like anybody else." Rupp would fume and stomp and grumble when he would lose to people like Georgia and Georgia Tech and Mississippi State, but secretly he had to know that his teams' repeated superiority had more or less shamed the others into paying more serious attention to basketball.

And so the Babe, his last years spent wandering not too happily around the American Basketball Association (where he did become the ABA's first coach to win 200 games), has left us; and even in death controversy swirls around him. When it was announced that the new coliseum in Starkville would be named for a deceased and rather anonymous former Mississippi State president, the clamor went up to name it for McCarthy. Which is par for the course, I suppose, because Babe couldn't get out of bed in the morning without making news. Surely some good old boys are sitting around today, somewhere in Mississippi, chuckling about how ol' Babe out-foxed the state legislature and took his team to the NCAA's Mideast Regionals in 1963. "Three times we'd won that damned SEC championship," Babe once told it, "and three times they'd let Kentucky go to the regionals because we couldn't play against blacks. I just decided, by God, Rupp wasn't gonna go this time." Slipping out of state just ahead of an injunction, driving all night to meet his team in Nashville, Babe sent Mississippi State against Loyola of Chicago (with its four black starters) at East Lansing, Mich. Back home the legislature was raging mad, predicting racial war and such. "About the only bad thing that happened was," Babe reported back, "we got beat by ten points." Even the rednecks in Mississippi, raised to believe that style is every bit as important as substance, loved the Babe for what he had done.

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SPORT
AUGUST

Billy Martin Will Never Finish Last

BY JAMES S. KUNEN

Billy Martin was making moves. It was the bottom of the tenth inning, Texas and Milwaukee tied, 6-6, George Scott on third for Milwaukee and nobody out. Martin ordered Jackie Brown, his pitcher, to walk Henry Aaron deliberately. Then Martin pulled the right-handed Brown out of the game and brought in Jim Umbarger, a left-hander, to face Darrell Porter, a left-handed hitter.

Those two moves worked. Porter forced Aaron; Scott held third; the score remained tied.

Martin moved again. He emerged from the Texas dugout and walked very slowly to the mound, through the waves of boos surging from the Milwaukee crowd. He conferred with Umbarger and with his catcher, Jim Sundberg, and examined the pitcher's mound with some care, rearranging a little dirt with his toe. Then he raised his right arm, indicating that he wanted Steve Foucault, a righthander, to replace Umbarger and face Sixto Lezcano, a right-handed hitter.

Then the opposing manager, Del Crandall, made a move. He sent up Mike Hegan, a lefty, to bat for Lezcano. Martin was out of moves. Foucault had to face one batter. He had to throw at least one pitch.

Foucault threw one pitch. Hegan swung, connected and pulled the ball on the ground toward first baseman Jim Spencer. Scott broke for home. Spencer positioned himself, waiting for the hard-hit ball. Just before it reached him, the ball took a crazy high bounce. Spencer had to lean backwards to make the stop. With no time to rearrange himself, he let fly a high throw to Sundberg who, desperate for the ball, had inched his way up the first-base line. Sundberg leapt, caught the ball, turned in mid-air and crashed down on Scott. Too late. Milwaukee won, 7-6, and the defeat prevented Billy Martin's Texas Rangers from moving into a tie for first place in the American League West.

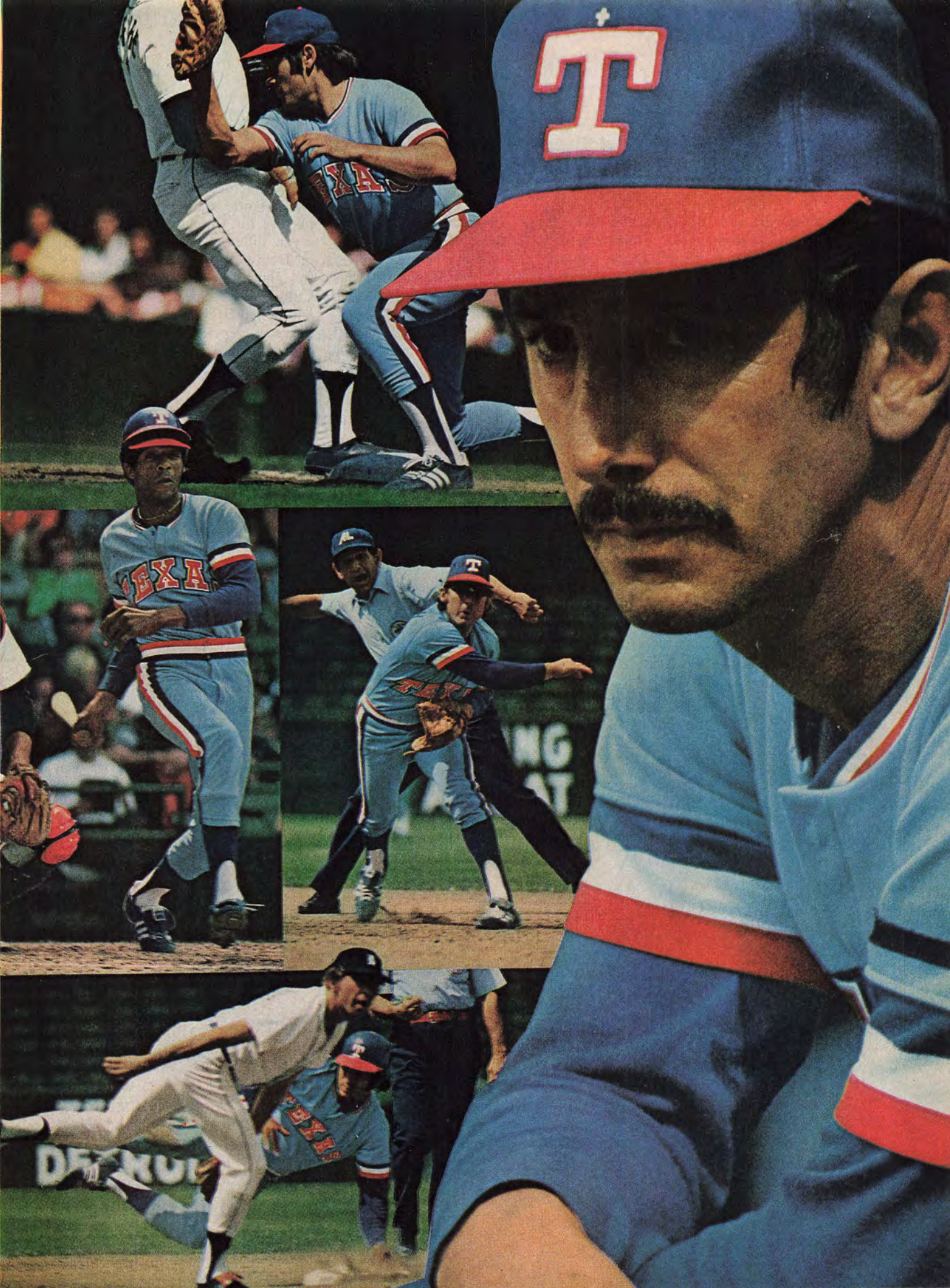
"What did you tell Foucault?" I asked Martin after the game, as he sat naked in front of his locker, staring into a cup of beer. Martin spoke straight at the beer. "I don't tell writers what I talk to pitchers about, now or ever," he said in a soft, high voice. "What do you want? The whole country to read it, for Chrissakes?"

In the space of 30 minutes, I had seen Billy Martin think, quickly and clearly; I had seen him act, logically and decisively; and I had seen him react, with enough controlled bitterness to prove that he was not one of the "nice" guys Leo Durocher always despised.

There were only two elements missing, perhaps the two central elements of Billy Martin. I had not seen him fight—and I had not seen him win. He does both—with shocking regularity.

Billy Martin's record as a fighter

Billy Martin looks out over his Texas talent: he demands hitting, fielding, hustling, fighting and, most of all, winning.



Never Finish Last

CONTINUED

and winner goes back to his days in the 1950s as Casey Stengel's "teacher's pet," the regular second baseman on the invincible Yankees. Martin was only a .250, .260 hitter on a team of monuments, but he was a leader, and he must have had something to do with their winning. In his six full years as a Yankee, from 1951 through 1956, the team won five pennants; the only year the Yankees didn't make the World Series was 1954, the year Martin spent in the army. And in his five World Series, he drew on that secret capacity that may be in everyone—but he knew how to tap it: He hit .333 and tied a bunch of World Series batting records.

He fought with his glove and with his bat and with his fists. Billy Martin grew up in the slums of West Berkeley, Calif., and learned to fight there, and in the quarter of a century he has spent in and around the big leagues, he has never learned *not* to. He looks for every opportunity to square-off.

In the early '50s, he battled with a St. Louis Browns' catcher named Clint "Scrap Iron" Courtney, who'd objected to the fact that Martin had tagged him in the mouth, and he battled with Jimmy Piersall, the Boston Red Sox outfielder who'd called him bush and challenged him to fight under the stands. By 1957, his reputation as a battler was so strong that when he and Mickey Mantle and Whitey Ford and a few other Yankees went to the Copacabana night club in New York to celebrate his 29th birthday, and a fight broke out in the club, Martin was blamed—even though he insisted, and witnesses agreed, he never threw a punch. The Yankees promptly traded Martin to Kansas City, a move that deeply saddened Stengel and Mantle and Ford. In 1960, playing for Cincinnati—his fifth of seven different major-league teams in five years—he was brushed back by Jim Brewer of the Chicago Cubs, then charged the mound and belted Brewer on the chin or in the eye, depending on whom you believe. An out-of-court settlement cost Martin $22,000.

Even when his playing days ended, Martin kept fighting. As a coach with the Minnesota Twins, he punched the team's traveling secretary. As manager of the Twins, he punched one of his pitchers, Dave Boswell.

If Martin, the manager, was still swinging, he was still winning, too. He has taken over four different clubs as a manager—Denver in the minors, and Minnesota, Detroit and Texas in the majors—and each time he has, in his first season,

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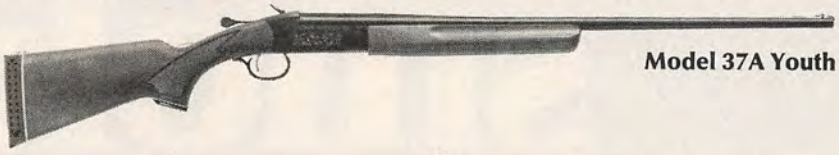

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Never Finish Last

CONTINUED

turned a losing team into a winning team. He took Minnesota from seventh place to first in a year, Detroit from fourth to second and Texas from last to second. He has never managed a team with a losing record (except for Texas in the last 23 games of the 1973 season, when he replaced Whitey Herzog with the pennant race already over).

As a reward for his success, Martin was fired after one year in Minnesota (Calvin Griffith, the Twins' owner, kept offering Martin advice—such as to ban card-playing among the Twins; "Cal wanted me to do so many things," says Martin, "that if I'd done them, I'd have lost the ballclub"), fired after less than three years in Detroit (even though he brought the Tigers a divisional title in his second season, Martin displeased the Detroit management by baiting umpires—and baiting the management).

Then last year, when he took the team with the worst record in baseball the previous season and turned it into an 84-76 second-place club, Martin was named manager of the year.

How does he do it?

For one thing, he has an eye for talent. When the Chicago Cubs were ready to discard Ferguson Jenkins before the 1974 season, Martin snatched him up—and Jenkins was the Comeback Player of the Year. In Florida, before the 1974 season, Martin took a liking to an unknown 24-year-old named Mike Hargrove, who had never played higher than Class A baseball. Martin promoted Hargrove to the majors, and Hargrove wound up as Rookie of the Year.

For another thing, Martin commands the respect of most of his players. "Ted Williams used to show up at seven-fifteen for a seven-thirty game," says Joe Lovitto, a Ranger outfielder who served time during Williams' Texas regime. "He didn't give a damn, so we didn't give a damn. You've got to respect the manager or you can't play for him. Martin respects us; we respect him."

Martin is a strategist, always thinking, always directing. "You can't figure him out," says Jim Fregosi, a utility man for the Rangers. "Billy's liable to do anything at any time."

But most of all, almost everyone agrees, Martin wins because he wants to.

"He wants to win, I think, more than any other being in the world." The source of that comment is a man not commonly associated with praise for Billy Martin. The source is an umpire, Ron Luciano, frequently the target for Martin's worst outbursts, his most abusive

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language. Early in 1975, Martin threatened to go to home plate "bugged," wearing a concealed microphone to capture dialogue between himself and Luciano. "I don't want to get him fined," said Martin in his typical blunt manner. "I want to get him fired."

And still Luciano says, "Texas is a very physical team. They go into second very hard. They're a big, strong scrappy team—rah-rah, boom-boom, college go-go-go. That's from Martin all the way."

Two days after the tenth-inning defeat in Milwaukee, Texas beat the Brewers, 6-0, and moved into first place in the West, half a game in front of Oakland's defending World Series champions. Then the Rangers took off for New York flying high, literally and figuratively, almost every man plugged into his own tape cassette player, MVP Jeff Burroughs listening to Jimi Hendrix, manager Martin listening to Jim Croce.

"Do you carry a special grudge when you play the Yankees?" I asked Martin.

"No," he said. "The only thing special about the series coming up is that somebody's threatened to shoot me."

"Doesn't that make you a little nervous?"

"There's nothing to be nervous about," said Martin. "If the good Lord wants things to happen, that's what's going to happen. He controls everything."

Including the pennant race?

"*Everything*. He's the name of the game."

"What makes you think God cares who wins the pennant?" I asked.

"He doesn't care who wins it. But He controls it. I mean whether we win or someone else wins—because there are probably a bunch of good Catholics on the other teams, too."

Martin is a good Catholic. He goes to Mass every Sunday and never prays to win. "There's only one person I'm concerned with," he says, "who knows the kind of person I am. That's the Guy Upstairs."

Of all the Yankees who were lying in wait for the Texas Rangers, the man linked most persistently with Martin, in the press and in the public mind, is Elliott Maddox, an outfielder Martin discarded before the start of the 1974 season. By the end of the 1974 season, Maddox was the Yankees' centerfielder, one of the ten Most Valuable Players in the American League and the least likely candidate for membership in the Billy Martin fan club. Maddox made no effort to disguise his dislike for his former manager (at Detroit as well as at Texas), to the point of labeling Martin both a racist and a liar, the latter for having promised him a chance to play but never having given it to him.

"I don't dislike Elliott Maddox at all," Martin says. "He hates me because I never played him. I never liked his make-up, his laziness, his show-offishness. When I sold him to New York, I was doing him a favor,

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Never Finish Last

CONTINUED

keeping him in the big leagues. Then he has one good year and becomes a big mouth."

In the first inning of the first game between Texas and New York in spring training, 1975, Maddox's mouth was the target for a Jim Bibby fastball. The pitch missed the mouth and hit Maddox's shoulder; later, a Stan Thomas pitch skimmed over his head. A cynic might suspect Martin ordered beanballs for Maddox, but Billy demurs.

Billy Martin learned to fight in the slums of West Berkeley, California, and he has never since learned how not to.

"He might have been thrown at," says Martin, "but not under orders from me. They brushed him off because they know Elliott Maddox gets scared to death when someone comes close enough."

It really didn't matter whether Martin had ordered the brushback —one Texas player told me—his well-known feelings toward Maddox were enough. "It would be a good way to score points with Billy —to throw at Maddox," said the Ranger, "especially for Thomas, a young guy trying to make the club."

In New York, in the regular season, with Texas trailing, 7-2, in the seventh inning, with first place fading away from the Rangers, Maddox came to bat. Thomas was pitching again. He hit Maddox in the left elbow, and Maddox left the game.

The next inning, Jim Sundberg was supposed to lead off for Texas. Martin pulled back Sundberg and sent up Bill Fahey, a reserve catcher with only five times at bat. Fahey was expected to hit for Sundberg—or, more precisely, to *get* hit for him. Catfish Hunter threw his first pitch high and tight, his third pitch behind Fahey's head.

The game wound up with three hit batsmen. Martin proclaimed his innocence, both in a phone call to rival manager Bill Virdon, who believed him, and in statements to reporters, who didn't. The most disturbing part of the incident was Martin's offering of Fahey as an obvious sacrifice.

"Did you expect Fahey to get thrown at?" I asked Martin.

"I was surprised and shocked," Martin said. "But I couldn't fault Hunter. He's got to protect his own players." Martin paused. "The Maddox pitch wasn't even up and in on him. I think he wants to get hit so he can cry. I got hit in the face by Tex Clevenger, got seven broken bones. But I didn't complain. Maddox is a big baby. What he needs is a good asskicking."

"You're just the one to do it," a bystander said.

"That would be so easy it'd be ridiculous," said Martin.

"If he thinks he's man enough to do it," said Maddox, after I'd told him what Martin said, "all he has to do is name the place."

Nothing further happened, except that Texas lost three straight games in New York and slipped out of first place. The following week, in Texas, the Yankees took three out of four from the Rangers. Maddox got 12 hits in the four Texas games.

In the final game of the Yankee series, Martin completely lost his cool. When rookie umpire Terry Cooney signaled a Yankee runner safe at home plate on a close play, Martin raced to the plate and unleashed all his frustrations. He screamed and swore, and then starting kicking dirt on Cooney, over and over and over, a comic scene for everyone except Martin and Cooney. Cooney kicked Martin out of the game, Martin kicked dirt on home plate for good measure, and then, in a final gesture, as he vanished into the dugout, Martin tore up his lineup card.

In the next few weeks, Martin tore up his lineup. He sent Willie Davis, the outfielder, whom he'd criticized for lack of hustle, to St. Louis for Eddie Brinkman; he sold Brinkman to the Yankees; he traded Bibby and Jackie Brown to Cleveland for Gaylord Perry. Billy Martin was moving again, maneuvering to regain the momentum his club had lost, maneuvering to make certain that he never finished last, and if someone—someone like Elliott Maddox—wanted to point out that Martin had given up three black players for one aging white pitcher from North Carolina, why they were just a bunch of crybabies. All Billy Martin wanted, all Billy Martin ever wants, was to win. ■

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I Remember Mickey

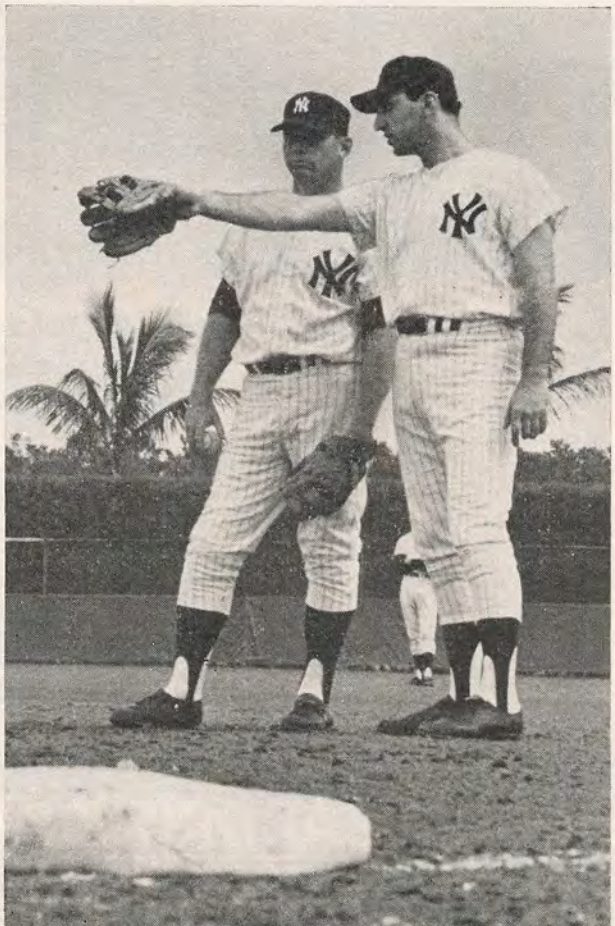
BY JOE PEPITONE WITH BERRY STAINBACK

Joe Pepitone could have been a big star. He had everything —talent, charisma, endless opportunity—everything except self-discipline. He spent a dozen years playing baseball, for the New York Yankees, Houston Astros, Chicago Cubs, Atlanta Braves and Japan's Yakult Atoms, but today, his career behind him at the age of 34, he's better remembered for his hair dryer than for his bat. Now Pepitone has written the wild story of what was and what could have been in an autobiography, Joe, You Coulda Made Us Proud,* *and in the following excerpts, he deals with his relationship with the superstar he never replaced, Mickey Mantle.*

The 1968 season wasn't all bad. At one point when I was in between apartments in Brooklyn, I moved in with Mickey Mantle at the St. Moritz Hotel in Manhattan. Mickey lived in a suite there during the season. I loved the guy. We'd had a lot of laughs together over the years, we'd been close, and I was sure this would be his final season with the Yankees. He played in too much pain to continue, even though he could have used the money, because his "investment counselors" over the years had put his bread into some very steep holes in the ground.

The night before our annual exhibition game at West Point, Mickey and I went out to celebrate St. Cadet's Eve. The day at the U.S. Military Academy was always a lot of fun, and we didn't have to worry about what time we got in that morning. I never worried, but Mickey was much more concerned about his health. It was at this time that I began wondering how well I would have done with the Yankees if I'd ever been just a little bit concerned about my hours. Mickey Mantle and Whitey Ford had always enjoyed having a drink now and then, now and then, now and then. But they were careful. They knew when to stop and come home. They were going to make the Baseball Hall of Fame. I would make the Hall of Fame only if they introduced a new category: Most Times Fined for Lateness. I never drank that much, but early on someone sure as hell busted my watch.

When Joe Pepitone pointed the way, his friend Mickey Mantle usually—but not always—had the good sense *not* to follow.



Since we could sleep on the bus ride up to the Point, we didn't devote a lot of energy to checking any clocks the night before. I think we got back to the St. Moritz about five a.m. It was just an exhibition game and neither of us figured to

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I Remember Mickey

CONTINUED

play more than an inning or two. And it didn't matter whether we hit the ball or not. So we hit a bunch of saloons, then I took Mickey to one of my favorite after-hours places, and a rollicking good time was had by all.

The only problem occurred about 10:30 the next morning when I awoke. We were supposed to have met the team bus at 9:30. I woke up Mickey: "Didn't you leave a call?"

"No. I thought you left a call."

"Mick, I thought *you* left a call."

"What're we gonna do?" he said.

"I don't know," I said. "I guess we'll have to call a limousine. I don't know any other way to get all the way up to West Point. My car was repossessed again."

Mantle picked up the telephone and called a limousine service. Then he said he wanted to speak to the driver, the guy who would chauffeur us.

"Here's what I want you to do," he said to the guy. "Stop someplace and buy us a gallon picnic jug, and fill it half full with ice. That's right. Then we want you to pick up three quarts of vodka and three quarts of orange juice. Right, quarts of both. And get us some plastic cups. Thank you."

About 40 minutes later we got a call from the desk that our driver was there. He was driving a 25-foot Cadillac full of our provisions. We climbed in, each carrying our uniforms in a bag, and instantly set about mixing breakfast. In a few moments we were toasting the morning. All that lovely vitamin C. We would not get scurvy on this trip.

By the time we reached West Point, we were fully, totally, completely bombed out of our trees. As we turned into the academy, we began putting on our uniforms. Amidst a great deal of laughter—I fell off the seat twice trying to get all those stockings over my feet and up to my knees—we finally managed to arrange our uniforms over our bodies as we approached the ball park. We could see people in the stands and our teammates just finishing up infield practice.

Mickey sat up straight and said to the driver: "Pull ri' up on the field."

"On the field? Are you sure, Mr. Mantle?"

"Ri' up on the fieeeld."

"Yessir."

He drove through the gate and onto the ball field. I leaned out the window and started waving my hat to everyone. I could hear the laughter, and I started laughing.

The driver stopped the car by the base line and Mickey yelled, "Let me out—we're gonna play some baseballll."

The driver hopped out and opened his door. Mickey stuck one foot out the door, heaved the rest of his body—and fell right on his face. I staggered around from the other side. Everyone was breaking up. I saw Ralph Houk, the manager, trying to hold his laughter, but not doing a very good job of it.

Mickey got up off the ground with a silly grin on his face, and the players gave him a tremendous hand and a few words: "Way to stand, Mick."

Ralph Houk came over and said, "Very funny—but you're both playing."

In the first inning Mickey got up and took three swings that looked like they'd been grafted onto his body by some Little Leaguer, then sat down. Houk took him out of the game after one inning. Good old Ralph made me play seven innings.

We still had over half the vodka and orange juice for the ride home and we finished it just as we pulled up to the St. Moritz. We had planned to change out of our uniforms and back into our clothes, but somehow we forgot. So we made a great effort to pull ourselves together as we walked into the St. Moritz lobby. A little old lady who passed us coming out said, "My, what nice costumes you're wearing."

"Sank you, mam," I said, strolling inside.

It was great fun until we got upstairs and Mickey happened to count the money in his pocket after he'd paid the driver. Instead of giving the guy his $50 fee plus a $50 tip, as he'd intended to, Mickey discovered he'd actually handed the chauffeur two hundred-dollar bills. Mickey didn't get too upset, though.

"Screw it," he said. "He was a good driver."

He was beautiful, my idol from the day I joined the Yankees. But one day during one of my extra-crazed, extrabad years, I really messed up with Mantle. If a right-hander was pitching, I usually batted fourth, right behind Mickey. If a lefty was going against us, Ellie Howard batted fourth. On this day we were playing in Minnesota, and the Twins were starting a right-hander, so I was hitting behind Mantle in pregame batting practice. At times Mickey would be late getting out on the field because it took so long to tape up his bad legs.

We had all taken our first ten swings in batting practice, and I hadn't noticed that Mickey wasn't there. There was a lot of kidding by the cage that day. The second time in the batting cage, we only had time for five swings apiece. So Mickey was in the cage, and when he took his fifth swing, I jumped right in there. But he just stood at the plate.

"Five swings, Slick," I said.

"I just got here, man," he said, annoyed. He gave me one of those looks that said, Don't you ever run in the cage when I'm in here. When I get out, then you come in.

I stood there, staring at him. I was embarrassed because all the guys were around the cage, and there was absolute silence, nobody saying a word. I got annoyed, feeling he was making me look like an ass in front of everyone.

"Why don't you get out here on time," I said, "like the rest of the guys?"

He turned full around to me, his

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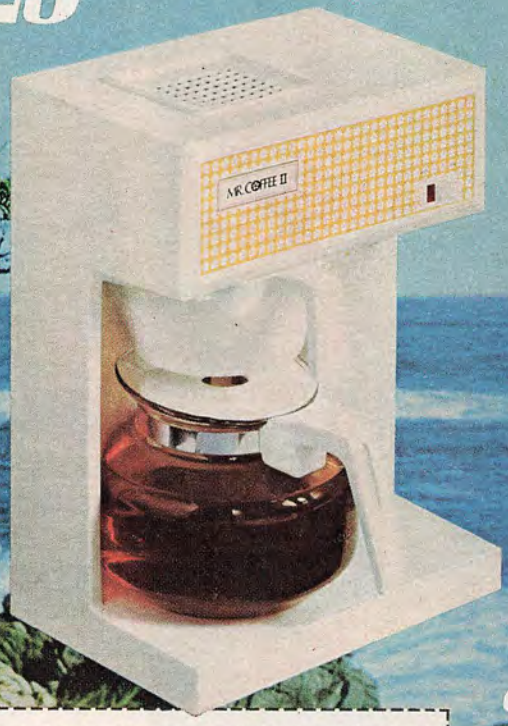

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I Remember Mickey

CONTINUED

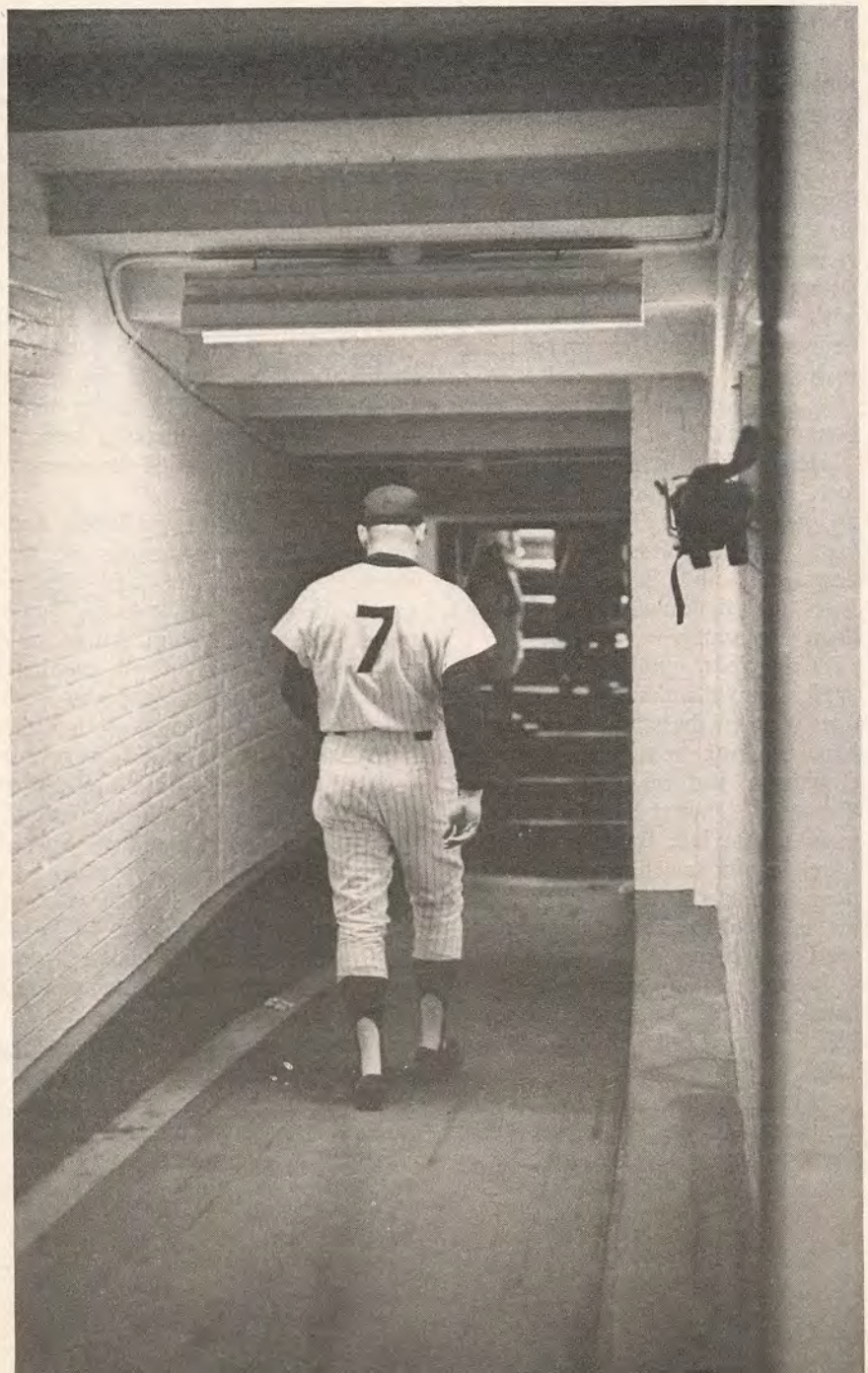
eyes squinted in anger. "What did you say?" he said.

"You heard what I said." This was the strongest guy on the Yankees, but I was in too deep to back off now. "It wouldn't hurt you to get here a little early to get your legs taped, then you could get on the field with the rest of us."

He was furious. "What are you gonna do about it?" he said.

"What are *you* gonna do about it?" I said. I thought he was going to kill me, punch me out right there in the batting cage. There were only about three feet separating us.

Mickey, who had been holding his bat by the knob, slammed it to the ground and walked out of the cage. He walked right to the dugout, went down the steps, and up the ramp into the clubhouse, his eyes straight ahead. He looked like a kid in a schoolyard, which was appropriate because the whole scene had been childish, two kids arguing about bruised feelings.



Then I really felt bad. I walked out of the batting cage and threw my bat at the netting. I followed him into the clubhouse. He was lying on his stomach on the trainer's table getting his legs rubbed down. His head, resting on the backs of his hands, was turned to one side.

I went over and crouched down by his face. "Slick, look, I'm sorry, man," I said. "I got out of line out there. I'm sorry. I mean it."

He stared right through me. Then he turned his head to the other side.

I stood up. "Man, I'm apologizing. I screwed up. Let's not hold any grudges, all right?"

He just lay there in silence, with the back of his head to me.

Mantle didn't speak to me for three weeks, and it really got heavy for me in the clubhouse. I loved the guy, and I needed his attention, his acceptance. He wouldn't give an inch. We'd come to the clubhouse in the morning and he'd turn away from me without even a nod. It went on like this, day after day. I said to myself, Is this going to go on all season?

Then I started wondering, What's going to happen if he hits a home run and I'm batting behind him? Is he going to embarrass me in front of the crowd the way Lou Gehrig embarrassed Babe Ruth? I remembered reading about a World Series game in which Gehrig got teed off at Ruth, and when Lou homered and trotted to the plate, he ran right past Ruth's outstretched hand, left him standing there holding air. Is Mickey going to do that, not shake my hand as he goes by?

He went into a slump after that scene in Minnesota, though I don't think that was any kind of factor. The whole team was going bad this season, nobody hitting much, driving in runs. Mantle was probably more depressed than the rest of us, because he always felt it was up to him to pick things up when the team fell off.

Three weeks later we were behind

His final years as a Yankee were tough ones for Mickey Mantle: His privacy was gone, and his skills were rapidly fading.

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I Remember Mickey

CONTINUED

in a game, 3–2, in the ninth inning. We had a man on first when Mickey came up. He hit the second pitch deep into the stands to win the game. I was standing at the plate, waiting, tense as hell. Here he comes, I said to myself, and stuck out my hand. He grabbed it and dragged me with him toward the dugout.

"Man," he said, "I'm sorry, too."

I was also in a slump, but after that I didn't give a damn if it lasted another month. I felt good again.

Later that season, Mickey went like 0-for-25 at one point, and we were in next-to-last place. Before a game in Washington, I saw Mickey sitting in the corner of the dugout with his head down, looking very depressed. I went over and sat next to him.

"Cheer up, Slick," I said. "We'll bounce back."

He just kept staring down at his feet. His arms were on his thighs and he was leaning forward, motionless, expressionless, just staring down. "I ain't helping the club, Joe," he said quietly. "I just can't do it any more."

"Cut it out, man," I said.

He jumped up, ran past me, and turned down the stairs. I went after him, thinking he'd headed for the clubhouse. But when I went down the stairs, I heard him in the bathroom on the left. Bang, bang, bang! I ran in and saw him punching the door on one of the stalls, pounding his fists into the metal. He was crying like a baby.

I grabbed him around the chest from behind, pinning his arms. "Slick, knock it off, for God's sake!"

"I can't hit the ball. . . . I haven't got it any more. . . . I'm just letting them use me. . . ." He broke away from me and punched the door again.

I ran up to the clubhouse and went into Houk's office. "Ralph, Mickey's going wild down in the bathroom . . . crying, punching a door."

"Leave him alone," Ralph said. "He's done it before. He'll come out of it."

I hurried back to the bathroom. Mantle was gone. I walked into the dugout. Mickey was sitting on the steps with a couple of the guys, listening to some anecdote. The knuckles on both of his hands were pink, but he was sitting there enjoying whatever was being said.

It was very hard for Mickey in his last few years with the Yankees. He'd always played with outstanding ball clubs, was used to winning. He was a fierce competitor and wanted so much to keep on winning, to end his fantastic career at the top. But suddenly the Yankees were at the bottom. The team got old, and Mickey's body abruptly deserted him. During the last year or so, he could barely pivot on his right knee batting left-handed. He never knew when it might buckle under him. But the front office pressed him to keep playing, he needed the money, and he did his best.

They were real down times, and Mickey seldom came out of his room. On road trips, he'd play a game, then come back to his hotel room, order dinner and drinks sent up, and just stay in all evening. Whitey Ford would stop by and have a couple of drinks with him, and that would be it. Mickey was tired of the traveling after all those years, tired of all the hassles every time he went out for dinner. So he stopped going out.

He couldn't go any place without being recognized, bugged. In New York, he'd order his meals from room service at the St. Moritz and relax by himself. It bothered the hell out of me when I was staying with him. He was a 36-year-old man, finishing up one of the greatest careers in baseball history, and he couldn't leave the room to get

a decent meal because people wouldn't leave him alone in restaurants, wouldn't let him eat in peace. I saw this and thought, The hell with that kind of recognition. It ain't worth it, being a prisoner of fame.

I got Mickey out to a few restaurants that last year. Little places with good food that were out of the way. I called the owners in advance to tell them I was coming with Mickey Mantle, that we wanted a table off in a corner, and that nobody was to bother Mickey while he was eating. "Sure, Joe," they'd say. "I guarantee no one will come near Mr. Mantle." Then we'd go there, and the owner himself or the maitre d' would come over and want to talk while we were eating. It was difficult; Mickey was such a star that people couldn't help themselves when he was around.

I remember in one restaurant we were having a great meal, really digging it. Mickey commented on how good it was, and he had a forkful of food by his mouth when a kid came up behind him and grabbed his elbow, asking for an autograph. Mickey instantly tensed up as the food spilled off his fork. But he didn't show he was upset.

"If you'll come back when we finish eating, son," he said politely, "I'll sign for you."

The kid went back to his table and the next thing we knew his father was standing over us. "Who the hell do you think you are Mantle," he said, "sending a kid away without signing his autograph book? That kid and thousands more like him pay your salary, Mr. Star. And don't you forget it."

I started to tell the guy off, which is not the smart thing to do in a public restaurant, but I was mad as hell. Fortunately, he turned and walked away. Mickey just shook his head and ordered another bottle of wine.

When I stayed with him, Mickey picked up so many checks that it got embarrassing. He wasn't in really great financial shape, either, but he wouldn't allow me to pay for anything. I remember one evening he was in the shower when the guy from room service came to the door.

"I have Mr. Mantle's order," the guy said.

"Oh, bring it right in," I said. "I'll pay for it." I figured I finally had my chance to grab a check. I looked in my wallet and I had forty dollars. That would cover dinner.

The guy carried in a tray of food. He carried in a second tray of food. He carried in a third tray of food. Then he rolled in a cart that was loaded with booze, ice, mixers. He handed me the check. The total was $332.75.

"He's in the shower," I said to the guy, handing back the check. "You can catch him later. Thanks."

Mickey walked out of the shower a moment later with a towel tied around his waist and another one rubbing at his hair. "Oh, the stuff's here," he said. "Good. Did I tell you I'm having a little party tonight?"

Mickey and I were sitting around the St. Moritz one afternoon, and I was cleaning a new batch of grass I'd just gotten. Mickey never smoked marijuana, refused to even try it, saying Scotch whisky was plenty good enough for him. I'd been after him to just take a toke or two, told him it wasn't as harmful to your body as booze, and that it made you feel a lot better. The guy who'd gotten me this batch had told me it was supergood. I kept after Mickey, told him he really ought to give grass a shot, but he declined.

I finished cleaning the grass, rolled a joint, and lit up. "Wow!" I said. It tasted different from anything I'd ever smoked. In seconds I was *up*, and a second toke delivered me to the following Tuesday. "This is sensational, Mick," I said. I was beaming, couldn't stop smiling.

"Let me have that thing," he said. "I just hold the smoke in?"

"Just draw it into your lungs and lean back," I said, feeling like my lips were spread so wide they were going to split. Very pleasantly.

He took a toke, waited a minute, and a smile came to his face. He took another. "Kinda nice, Joe."

This was over three hours before

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I Remember Mickey

CONTINUED

game time, and I knew the stuff would wear off way before we had to play. It always wore off within a couple of hours. We finished the joint and drove to the stadium, giggling all the way. But instead of wearing off, this dope seemed to get stronger. I found out later that it was Colombian, which I had never used before. Two tokes of it will keep you aloft for hours.

Mickey went to bat in the bottom of the first inning. I watched him swing and I had to hold back the laughter. His swing was perfectly level, but it was so relaxed it looked like he was swinging under water. Mickey, of course, was notorious, after he struck out, for slamming his bat into the ground, throwing his bating helmet in anger. This day when he took his third slow-motion swing, he turned around, very carefully placed his bat on the ground, and carried his batting helmet back to the dugout tenderly. I had to cover my mouth with my hand. Everyone was looking at him strangely as he walked back with the tiniest little grin on his face.

He struck out twice in that game, and I struck out three times. The dope still seemed to be getting stronger. I finally took myself out of the game in the eighth inning. I was afraid I would get killed by a fly ball. I don't know how, but Mickey played perfectly at first base. If I'd had to handle the throws there, I think I would have taken myself out in the fifth. Incredibly, Mickey came up in the ninth with a man on second, and singled in the winning run.

He still had that little smile on his face when he walked into the clubhouse. But he came right over to me and whispered, "Don't ever give me any of that stuff again."

"I didn't know it was *that* strong, Mick."

The next time I rolled a joint at his place, Mickey got up and left the room. I never smoked before another baseball game. Ever.

Toward the end of his final season, Mantle's next home run would be the 535th of his career. He would pass Jimmie Foxx on the all-time list. Only Babe Ruth, Henry Aaron, and Willie Mays had hit more home runs in the majors than Mickey.

We were playing in Detroit, and Denny McLain was pitching for the Tigers. McLain had already won 30 games in 1968, and he had something like an 8-0 lead against us in the late innings. Mantle came up for his last time in the game, and on the first pitch I almost collapsed in the on-deck circle where I was kneeling. McLain just lobbed the ball in, right down the middle. Mickey was so startled, he froze, just watched the ball float past him.

He looked out at McLain, who had a shocked expression on his face, like, *What was wrong with that?* Mickey understood. He made a little gesture with his bat: *A bit lower, Denny.* McLain smiled.

The next pitch floated in right where Mickey had called for it, and Mickey fouled it off. Bill Freehan, the Tiger catcher, chuckled. McLain grimaced: *What do you want?* Mickey nodded: *Just one more.* McLain lobbed it up and Mickey drove it into the upper deck in right field at Tiger Stadium. The fans gave him a tremendous hand as he rounded the bases.

I stepped up next and, figuring McLain was in a good mood, signaled with my bat where I'd like a pitch. McLain smiled, went into his windup, and fired a fast ball that hopped about a foot over the inside corner of the plate—a pitch *nobody* could hit. The players on both benches roared.

Mickey and I became very close in that month I bunked with him, and one night we got into some really heavy stuff. It was late, and we'd had a pile of booze. He told me something that I'd always heard he believed, but I'd never heard it from him before. Mickey's father had died at age 39, and he talked about that, and about the fact that there was a history in his family of males dying young. Mickey said he was convinced he would die before he was 40, that he had that feeling for years, and now there weren't too many left on his calendar.

I couldn't do much to comfort him. I told him that I felt the same way. My father had died at 39, his father had died at 42, and a number of other men on the Pepitone side of my family had died early.

Mickey leaned his head on my shoulder and started weeping, saying, "It's too young." I put my arm around him. "Take it easy, Mick," I said. "Take it easy."

He couldn't stop crying.

"What difference does it make?" I said. "It's been fun."

Then I told him about a time when I was eight or nine years old. My father and I were out crabbing early one morning on the Cross Bay Bridge. I remembered how still the air was, and how the bright-bright sun was hitting the water at such an angle that it looked like a vast mirror on one side of the bridge, and on the other side the water was bumpy, and it looked like you could reach out and touch the bumps, smooth them, even though the water was way beneath us. It was kind of otherworldly, nice. I looked up at my father and said, "Dad, I feel like I'm never gonna die. Like I'm gonna live forever and ever." He gave me one of those smiles that warmed my whole body.

But after he died, it suddenly came to me: I'm also going to die young. I'll never make 40, either. That's how it's going to be. That's how it is. I'd talked to the shrink about it, and he couldn't convince me otherwise. I told Mickey that that was why I partied so much, why I tried to stuff in so much living when I could. Then I laughed, but there was no mirth in it. Underneath that laugh, I was thinking about my father, wishing he were sitting with us right then, with Mickey Mantle and me. Things wouldn't have seemed so bleak. ■

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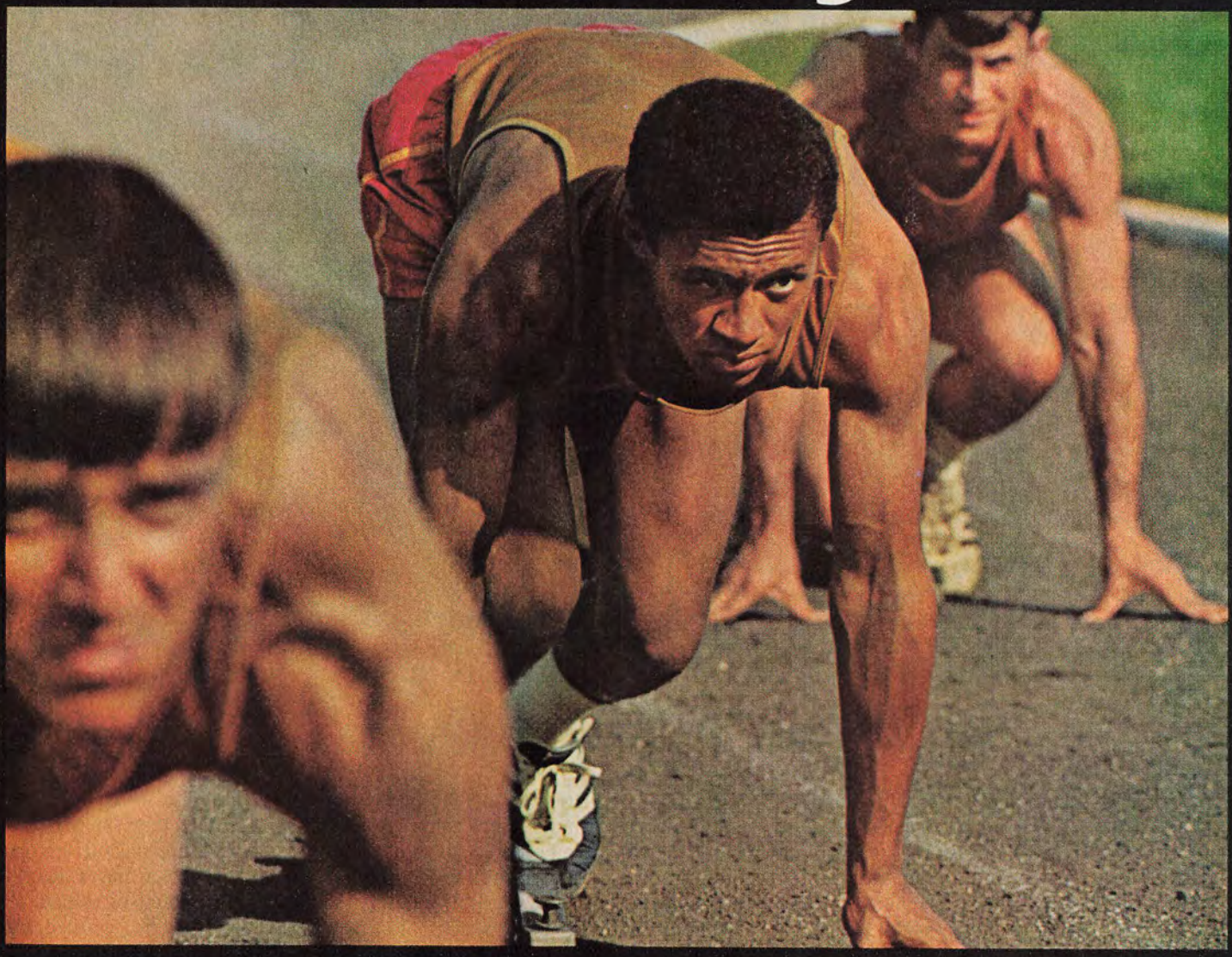

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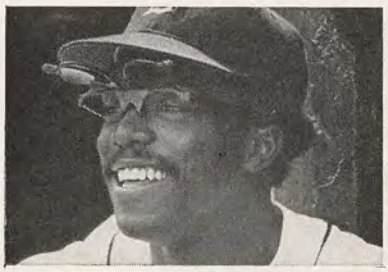
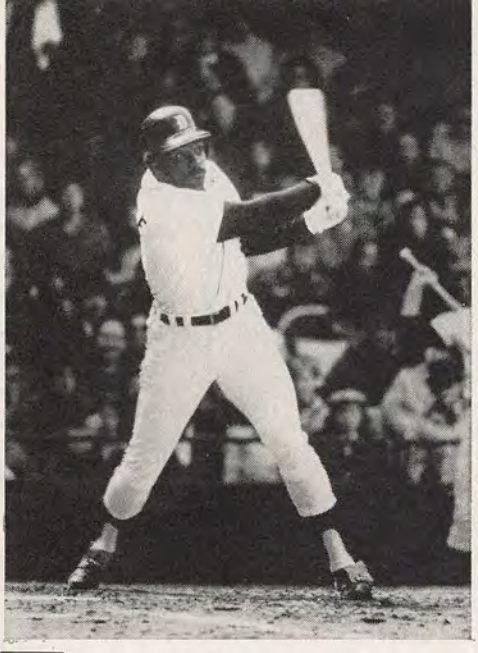
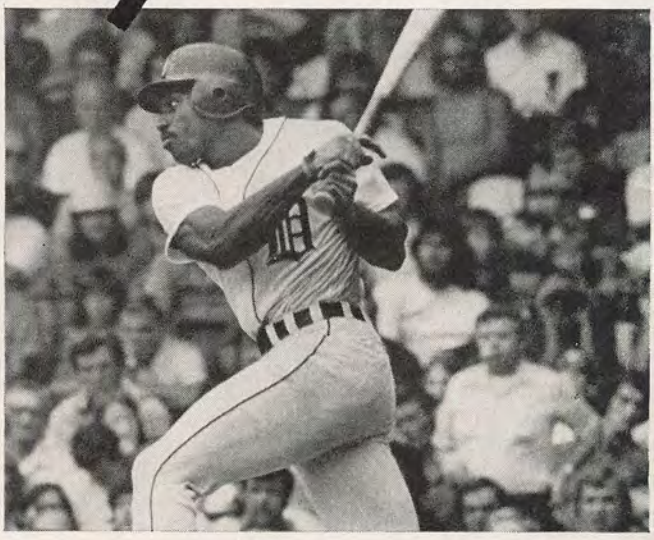


RON LEFLORE, FLYING TIGER



BY PAUL HEMPHILL



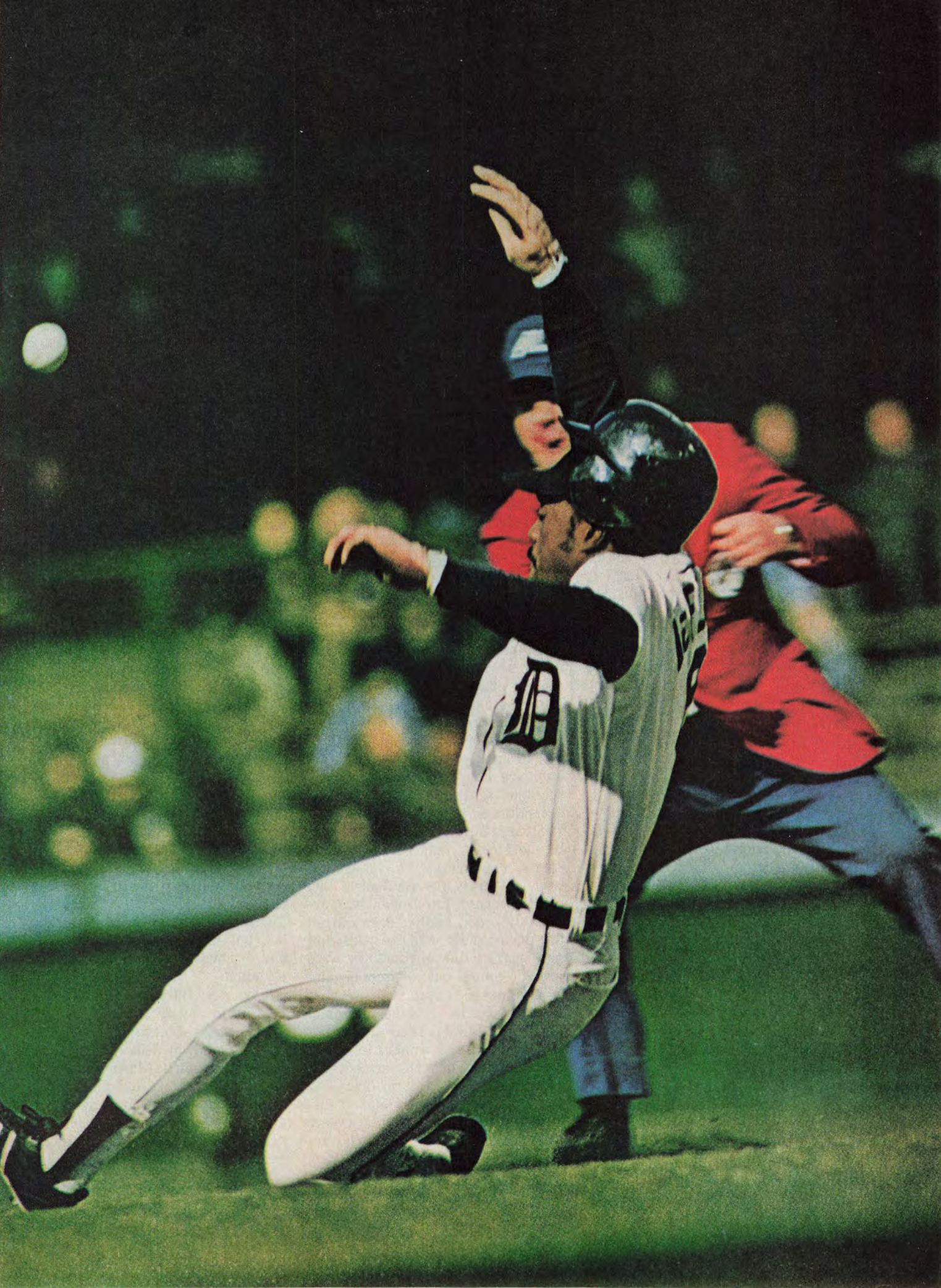
In the old days, kids made it to the major leagues the hard way: Long years at short pay in the minors, scrapping their way up for a chance to go to spring training with " the big club."

In recent years, more and more kids have made it the easy way: A big bonus and a little seasoning, then moving swiftly into the majors.

Ron LeFlore made it his own way, a very special way: He got to the big leagues after only one year as a pro—and after more than three years as a con.

Raised in middle-class inner-city surroundings in Detroit, LeFlore's interest in "the street" rather than sports eventually led to his packing off to prison for armed robbery at the age of 17. Prior to that he had never played in an organized game of baseball, but utter boredom got him interested in the game and suddenly he was hitting well over .500 and stealing every base he wanted to steal for the team at Southern Michigan State Prison. The Detroit Tigers found out about LeFlore and gave him a modest bonus and, securing him an early release, dispatched him to their Class A team at Clinton, Iowa, to play out the last month of the 1973 season. Abruptly, only last summer, with a grand total of 134 minor-league games behind him, LeFlore was rushed up by the Tigers. His inexperience showed painfully, especially in the outfield where fly balls dropped around him like short mortar rounds, but it was clear to the American League that the six-foot, 200-pound LeFlore's .260 batting average and 23 stolen bases in only 59 games represented an omen. "I knew the first time he worked out for us," says one member of the Tiger front office, "that he had the greatest raw tools I'd ever seen. How else could he have made it so quickly, with so little experience?"

This year, then, the rehabilitation of Ron LeFlore the baseball player focused on the finer points which he had never had time to even hear about. "I really don't think I have too many weaknesses," he was saying early in the season. "I made eleven errors at Detroit last summer, six of them on fly balls I simply



LeFLORE

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overran. I was in a daze, anyway. I mean, things had happened so fast. When they brought me up they said, 'You're gonna play every day, you're gonna learn through your mistakes.' I was playing on instinct, really, so I had to learn things like picking up the spin on the ball, and hitting the inside fastball, and getting a better jump on the pitcher. I'm just learning, but I think it was meant for me to play baseball."

It is that rare blend of power and blazing speed, and a calm insouciance probably gained from sitting around in a prison for 38 months, which most excites the Tigers about LeFlore. Placed in the leadoff spot at the beginning of the '75 season by manager Ralph Houk, LeFlore soon appeared able to reach his personal goals of 60 stolen bases and a .300 batting average. "He got picked off second base with the bases loaded one day during spring training," says Fred Hatfield, who managed at AAA Evansville last year when LeFlore came through for nine games, "but he can learn not to do that. He's got power, and he gets to first base as fast as any right-hander you're ever going to see."

It is Ron LeFlore's maturity—amazing maturity for someone who spent the formative late teen years shuttered from the real world—which accounts, as much as anything else, for his remarkable emergence. "They had told me I was going to get him," recalls Jim Leyland, LeFlore's manager his first year at Clinton, Iowa, in Class A, "and frankly I didn't know what to expect. You can have all sorts of special problems when a kid is on parole. Can he cross a state line with the club? Do I have to keep him out of bars and pool halls? What happens if a brawl breaks out on the field and he piles in? Well, there was never a problem. He never had played at night, or been on those long bus rides, or had to make any decisions of his own for a good while. It's amazing how those things can trip up a kid who's been living a normal life. I guess the prison experience helped Ron, though, rather than hurt." The players at Clinton that year were curious, too ("Everybody was talking about this tough ex-con when he walked in on us," says Gerald Tyler, a lanky black pitcher who roomed with LeFlore later), and LeFlore knew it was his job to talk it out. "I told 'em the first day, 'Yes, I've been in prison. I messed up. When I was sitting in solitary confinement for three months the first time, I thought maybe I'd go back to crime and drugs. But now I've got a chance in baseball. I've served my time.' It hardly ever came up anymore. I got one really tough letter mailed from Detroit, saying I didn't deserve another chance, and I let everybody on the team read it."

One of three sons of parents who have always held steady jobs and held their family together (Ron's father works in a diesel factory, his mother at a day-care center), LeFlore more or less drifted into crime and drugs because most of his buddies were doing it. He played football in his first year of high school, but gave it up when he suffered a shoulder separation, and with the exception of pickup basketball and stickball games on playgrounds and in the streets, that was it for his sports experience. "I thought I wanted to play pro football at one point, because Jim Brown was everybody's idol, and we'd go out on the playgrounds with no pads and play tackle. But my buddies were just dropping out of school and going into the streets. It wasn't that I wasn't able to get things at home. My parents always tried to do what they could. But I wanted to be independent." When he was 16, LeFlore ran away from home and "stayed where I could" after a dispute with his father over a sweaty summer factory job he didn't want to keep. Dabbling in shoplifting and drugs, not going to school or anywhere else anymore, LeFlore got into big trouble late in '69 when he was 17. "If I'd been that deep into street crime," he says, "I wouldn't have been caught on my first big one. Three of us were sitting around smoking marijuana and I suggested we rob a place. If they'd said no, I would've said no, too. But it was my suggestion and I had the .22 rifle, so we robbed $35,000 from this check-cashing store on Mack Avenue and got caught immediately." He was given five-to-15 at the state prison in Jackson, Mich.

Like most inmates, he spent his early months rebelling. "I'd get in fights, refuse to work, stuff like that." He spent a total of five-and-a-half months in solitary confinement, having his meals pushed through a slot, seeing only his parents on sporadic visits, speaking to no one else. When he came out of solitary, he was a changed man. "I said I'd do anything to stay out of there, so I got my high school diploma. That gave me a better record, so then I was able to get a recreation assignment. I could work in the gym from 6:30 in the morning until 9:30 at night if I wanted to, and that's when I really got interested in sports. I was playing football, baseball and basketball, and a couple of guys said I could probably play in the pros. One time we played Hillsdale College in football and I scored a couple of times, and the coach there said he would give me a scholarship when I got out. Another time I got a guy who worked for the prison to write the Tigers and recommend a tryout for me, but they turned me down flat and I almost put baseball out of my mind."

One day, Billy Martin, then the Detroit manager, and a group of Tiger players went to the State Prison on a goodwill visit. A dozen prisoners confronted Martin and told him what a great ballplayer Ron LeFlore could be. Martin agreed to give LeFlore a tryout, then left the prison. A few weeks later LeFlore, home on a weekend furlough, called

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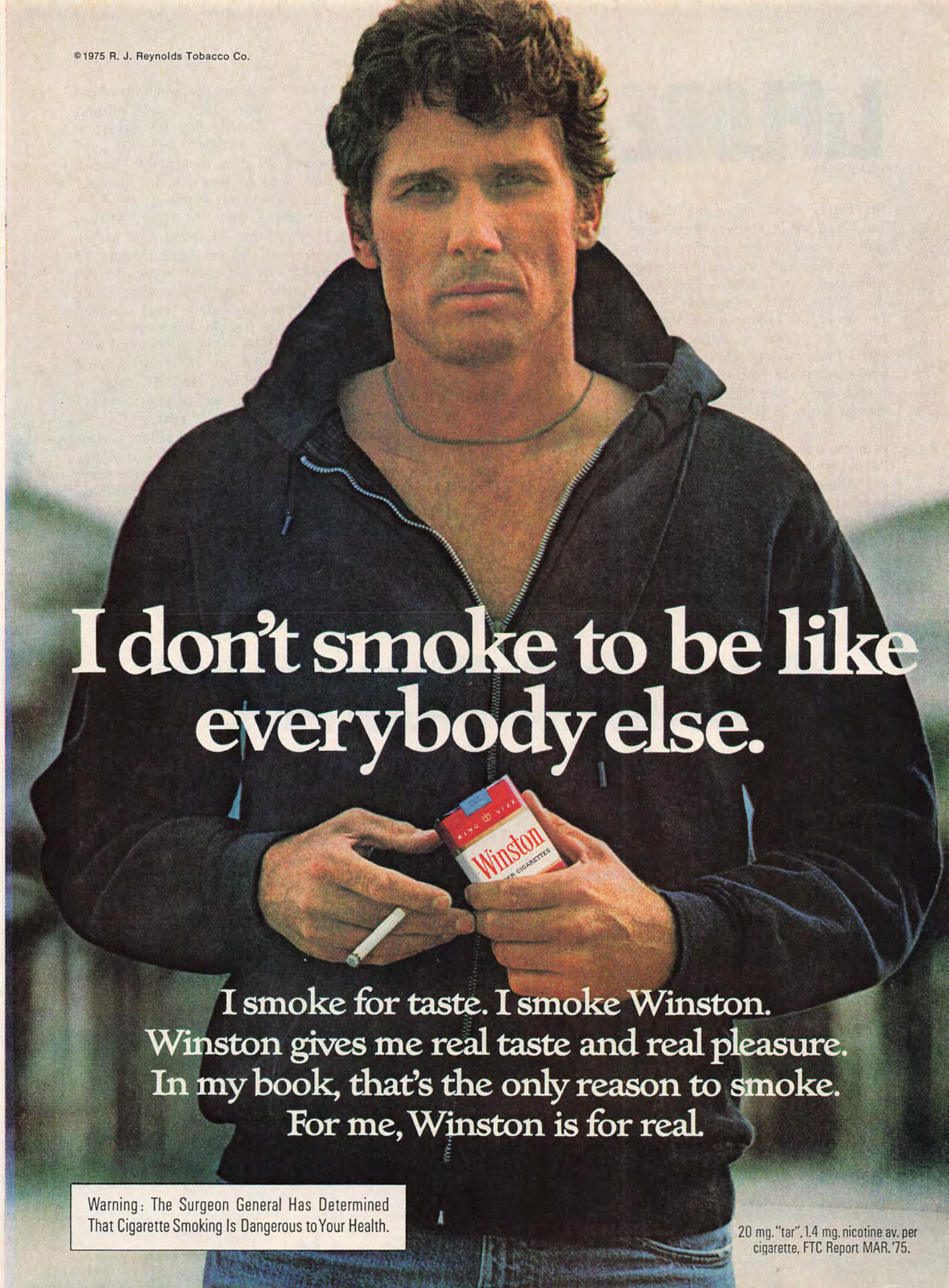
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LeFLORE

CONTINUED

the Tigers' office, asked for his tryout—and got it. He was impressive, and two weeks later another tryout was arranged at a city park on what happened to be LeFlore's 21st birthday. This time everybody knew for sure. Bill Lajoie and Ed Katalinas, the club's scouting heads, offered a bonus of $3,500 and made preparations to spring LeFlore a month early. "We had to do a lot of special things in Ron's case," Katalinas recalls. "We had to notify the commissioner's office and get affidavits from everybody, document everything, because baseball was worried about the drug problem and its image in general. We had to find out how Ron would be able to check in with parole officers, with all that traveling he'd be doing across state lines in the Midwest League."

LeFlore was released from prison on July 2, 1973 and went home to see his parents and buy some clothes, and three days later he was driven by Lajoie to meet the Clinton Pilots in Decatur, Ill. ("They more or less put Ron in my custody, and I don't know what would have happened if he'd decided to run.") The fans of Clinton knew about the rookie's background, but there were no incidents. LeFlore singled to deep short in his first game a week-and-a-half later, and through all of the learning process—the travel, the lights, the curve balls—managed to hit .277 in 32 games. When the season ended at Clinton, LeFlore was immediately sent to the Florida Instructional League, where he got into another 50-odd games, and for the '74 season was assigned to Lakeland of the Florida State League.

"Looking back," says LeFlore, "I still can't believe how fast things happened last year. Stubby Overmire was my manager at Lakeland and he really helped me. He'd say, 'You looked bad on the pitch, but you won't make the same mistake again.' " In the first 93 games at Lakeland, LeFlore hit .339 and scored 79 runs to lead the league, and stole 42 bases in 46 attempts. He had barely arrived at AAA Evansville, when the Tigers' Mickey Stanley broke his hand, and a rush call went out for LeFlore only 13 months from the day he was let out of prison. The Tigers were going nowhere, so Ralph Houk decided to baptize the kid under fire. In all, during 1974, in the minors and with Detroit and in the Instructional League, LeFlore stole 88 bases in 105 tries. He was, of course, voted Tiger Rookie of the Year.

Not surprisingly, LeFlore's closest friend on the Tigers is Gates Brown, who was signed by the same club out of a reformatory in Mansfield, Ohio. "We've been down the same road, so I guess it's natural that we'd hang out together," says LeFlore, whose locker is next to Brown's at Tiger Stadium. It was Brown who guided LeFlore through

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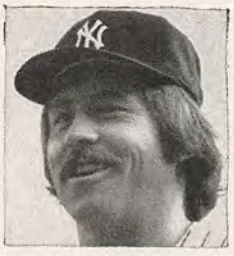

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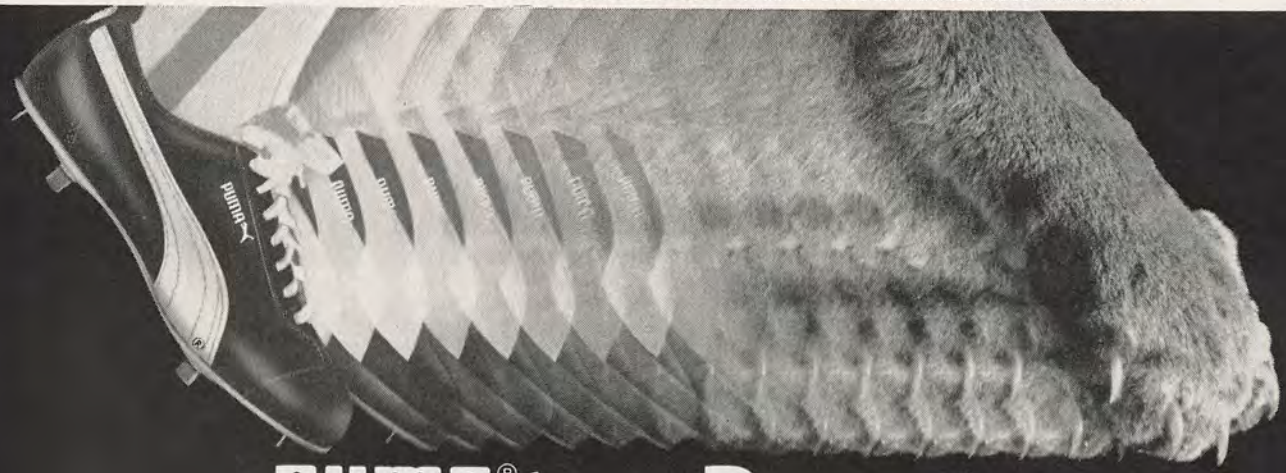

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the early days when he came up to the big club—on everything from talking to the press to how to dress —and together they visited the prison at Jackson to talk with the inmates after the last World Series. "It was like a coming-home party," LeFlore says. "I'd lived with them for three-and-a-half years. Gates and I enjoyed it, and so did they."

Equally unsurprising is the way LeFlore is handling his sudden success and his affairs in general. "When I first got out and went off to Clinton, I'd run around some. Being outside was a new experience. I was seeing all of these different towns and traveling, and meeting people, and free to move around." He quickly calmed down—he was released from parole just before spring training began this year—and spent last winter at his parents' home in Detroit. He is thinking of attending a junior or community college for some brushup courses, then enrolling in a major university. Already he is looking into ways he can work with juvenile delinquents.

Dizzying ride that it has been, though, there have been plenty of sober moments to keep LeFlore's feet on the ground. "One of my partners in the robbery was killed a few months after I got out," he says. "I was down in the Instructional League in November of '73 and I called my mother one night and she told me. He killed a policeman while he was robbing a jewelry store, and they hemmed him up in the basement and killed him." And all of the other cronies from childhood? "The majority of them have drug habits now and don't care about much. When I go back and see them, though, they surprise me by not encouraging me to go back to crime but to stay straight. They don't even encourage me to come around anymore. I'd made up my mind not to ignore them, because these are the guys I grew up with. I mean, I still tell them, if you need some money or I can help you I will, but I can't afford to hang around that much because I got something going for myself. I'm trying to take advantage of it." ■

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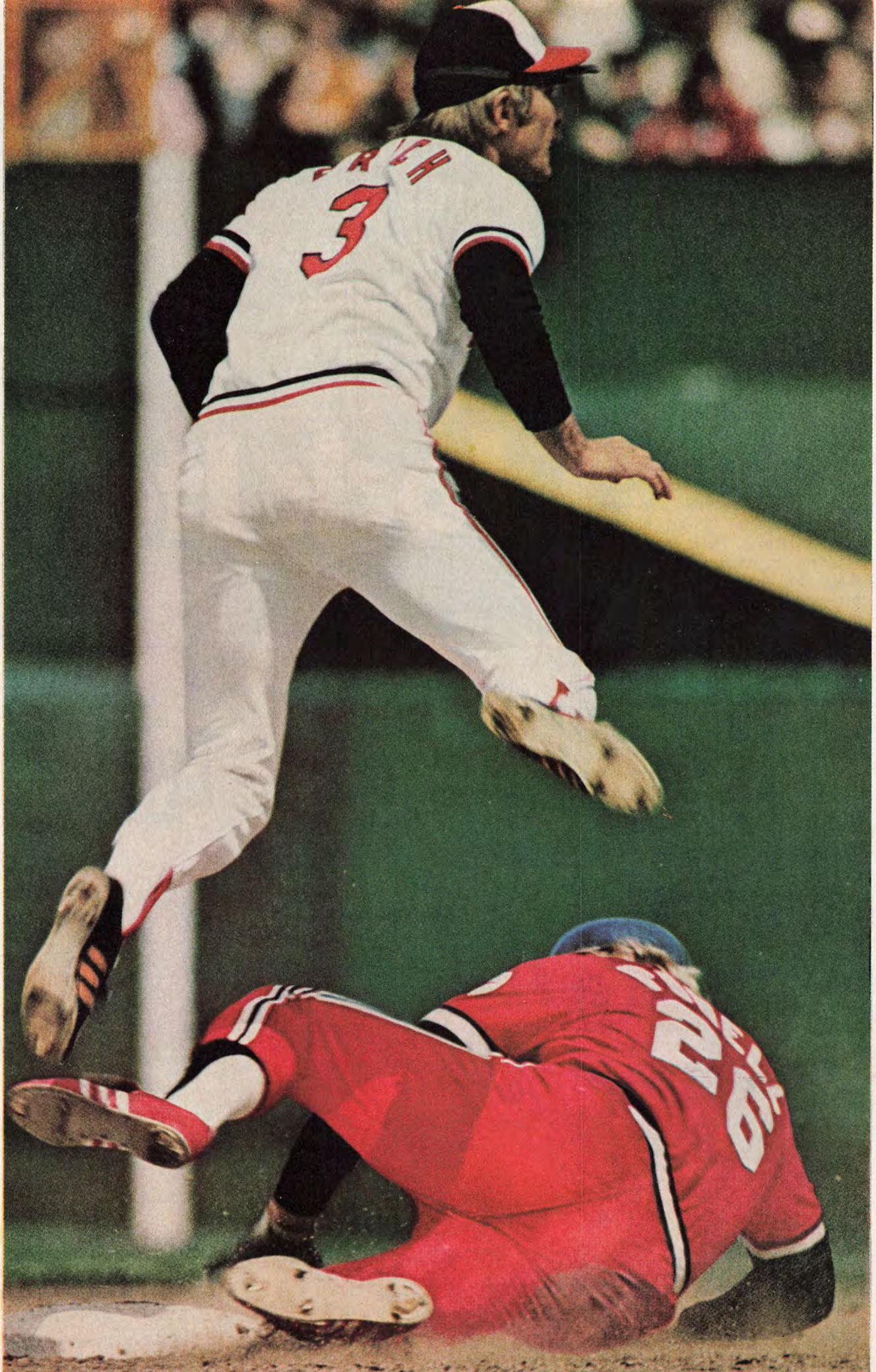
3

The Grich Who Steals Base Hits

BY DON KOWET

In the first month of the baseball season, the Baltimore Orioles, reigning Eastern Division champions, forgot how to win. After nearly a decade of divisional, league and world championships, the Orioles didn't know where to turn for help.

As Ross Grimsley took the mound for the Orioles on a rainy, dreary Tuesday night he nervously played with a metal half-moon hanging on a chain around his neck. He had borrowed the trinket from his wife's jewel box. Grimsley, an 18-game winner in 1974, was looking for his first victory of the season after four losses. He was counting on the medallion to put the hex on the opposition, the Chicago White Sox.

All the magic he needed, though, was performed by Bobby Grich at second base. Grich initiated a pair of slick double plays that throttled White Sox threats early in the game. In the eighth, he charged a slow grounder off Bucky Dent's bat, scooped up the ball on the dead run and flipped it backhanded to first baseman Lee May for an inning-ending out that left a pair of White Sox stranded. At bat, he tripled off the right-field wall, then scored on a sacrifice fly by Brooks Robinson. He later walked and scored, and the Orioles won, 3-2, ending Grimsley's losing streak.

Later, in the locker room, while Grimsley fiddled happily with his half-moon, manager Earl Weaver was more pragmatic.

"I keep my good luck charm at second base," he said, smiling.

In the press box, as soon as the White Sox made their final out, Frank Lane holstered the binoculars he'd been peering into throughout the game. One of the shrewdest judges of baseball talent as an executive with Milwaukee, Chicago, Atlanta, Kansas City and St. Louis, Lane was scouting the game for the California Angels, his present employers, who would follow the White Sox into Baltimore.

Lane paid particular attention to Bobby Grich. There was, he said, no better second baseman in the American League than the two-time All-Star. In 1974, Lane pointed out, as he yanked a stat sheet out of his briefcase, Grich had won his second consecutive Gold Glove. In each of those two years, he had handled more than 900 chances, the first American-League second baseman to do so in 25 years. Last year, he led American League second basemen with 957 total chances, 484 putouts (a major league record), 453 assists and 132 double plays.

And, Lane said, Grich was just as effective on offense. Last season he led the Orioles in home runs (19), triples (six), doubles (29), runs scored (92), sacrifice flies (eight), walks (90), total bases (245), slugging (.430) and on-base percentage (.371). And the six-foot-two, 180-pounder is now only 26 years old.

Wednesday night, before the second game of the Chicago series, Orioles manager Earl Weaver was sitting behind the desk in his office, talking about his prize second baseman, who happens to be the son of a former prizefighter. "Grich is a real hardnose. He's like Frank Robinson was on our club. He comes to the ballpark day in and day out, ready to play. He doesn't need any coaching, 'cause he does everything right."

There was at least one memorable occasion, however, when Earl Weaver thought the second baseman did something very wrong: He almost got into a fistfight with his manager. Grich had signed with the Orioles for $40,000 in June, 1967, after playing on a high school team that also included a sophomore pitcher named Jeff Burroughs, who now hits home runs for the Texas Rangers, and a shortstop named Eddie Leon, who later played for Cleveland and Chicago. Grich passed up football scholarships at UCLA and USC (he was a quarterback) to switch from second base at Wilson High to shortstop with Bluefield in the Appalachian League. In 1968, he played for Stockton in the California League. Then, in 1969, with Dallas-

Grich

CONTINUED

Ft. Worth, he batted .310, up 82 points from the previous season. As a reward, in 1970, he was promoted to Rochester of the International League, and forced the parent club to take notice of him. By mid-summer, he had a .974 fielding percentage. He batted .383.

His progress was both a blessing and a curse for the Orioles' management. Grich had come up through the organization as a shortstop, but the Orioles already had Mark Belanger, the best defensive shortstop in the majors. Grich could play third, too, but not as flawlessly as the incumbent, Brooks Robinson. And at second base, the Orioles had Dave Johnson, a sure-handed fielder who would hit .281 in that 1970 season and be named an All-Star. When Grich was brought up to the Orioles for the second half of that season, he was tested at all three positions. The insecurity of not knowing if and where he was going to play each day shattered his confidence. In 63 games with Rochester, he had made only nine errors. In just 30 games with the Orioles, he committed seven.

He wasn't hitting, either. So Weaver kept lifting him for a pinch-hitter in every crucial situation. "It was August 20th," Grich says, his recall for the date a measure of how much the incident still means to him. "We were fourteen games in front with only a month to go in the season. We were playing the Red Sox. I had started the game, and had hit two hard ground balls off Sonny Siebert, although both times they'd been close outs. So, it was the bottom of the ninth inning, we were losing, 4-3, the bases got loaded, and I was due to come up. Then—it was the fourth or fifth time he had done it—Weaver calls me back. He sends up Chico Salmon to hit for me.

"Well, I got fed up. I just couldn't see why he wouldn't let me hit—when it looked like we were a shoo-in for the pennant. I was only 21 years old, and the experience might do me good.

"So he pulls me out, and I just got really upset. I flung my bat at the bat rack. I walked by him and I said, 'If you don't leave me in there once in a while, how do you expect me to ever learn to hit?' "

Earl Weaver may look gentle with his choir-boy haircut and his soft, pudgy face. But his tantrums are legendary. One night in the minors, for example, Weaver got down on his hands and knees and covered home plate with his body. He then screamed at the plate umpire: "Why should it make a difference? You haven't looked at it yet!" Another time, while coaching third in Charleston, W.Va., he threw a fit when an umpire called a shot along the third-base line foul. He bent down, ripped the third-base bag loose, picked it up and ran off the field. Weaver is not the sort of man who enjoys abuse from anyone—especially a rookie.

Well, when Grich complained, he says, "Earl just blew up. I had said it in front of everyone on the bench, see? I had showed him up. So he grabbed me by the arm and shouted, 'Don't you ever tell me how to manage! There's only one manager on this ballclub!' And I said, 'Hey, you better get your arm off me, 'cause if you don't . . .' and just then Elrod Hendricks jumped in between us, or I don't know what would have happened."

After that game, Grich and Weaver made peace behind closed doors. Grich admitted it was wrong to criticize his manager in front of his teammates. Weaver assured him that he was always willing to listen to complaints . . . in private. Grich left satisfied, feeling that even if he had made his point badly, it was the last time Weaver would lift him for a pinch-hitter.

"So, about three weeks later, with thirteen days to go in the season," Grich says, "we still had about an eleven-game lead and were about two days short of clinching the pennant. Again, it's the ninth inning, two out, and I'm up with the bases loaded. I look around—and hell, there's Weaver, waving me back for a pinch-hitter! I had learned my lesson, though," Grich adds, laughing. "This time I just threw my bat down, went in, took a shower and went home. And then," he adds, "I yelled at my wife."

In 1971, Grich returned to Rochester and led the International League in fielding percentage, assists and batting average (.336). But it was his productivity in another category that suddenly made second baseman Dave Johnson expendable. In his previous four years of organized baseball, Grich had hit a total of only 22 home runs. In 1971 alone, he hit 32.

"And an infielder that can hit home runs," says Earl Weaver, "especially a shortstop or a second baseman, becomes twice as valuable on a ballclub, because then you can go for defense in another position. If your second baseman is hitting home runs, say, then you can afford to go with a super defensive catcher who can't give you the long ball."

In 1971, Dave Johnson hit 18 home runs—almost twice the number he had hit in his best previous year. But Johnson was 28, Grich was only 22. In December, 1972, Johnson became an Atlanta Brave, and Grich became the Orioles' starting second baseman.

The key to his new-found power, Grich explains, was something he had read in a book about Joe DiMaggio. "When I got to the part where the writer detailed, day by day, DiMaggio's 56-game hitting streak," Grich recalls, "I couldn't believe it. It knocked me out, how this guy hit doubles, home runs, triples—almost nothing but long shots. So I thought to myself, 'This guy definitely had the right idea. Why don't I give it a try?' I went and looked at photographs of him hitting. Someone lent me a film, too. And what I kept looking at was his very wide stance. And I decided to

try to imitate it if I could."

While perfecting his new stance, Grich hit 12 home runs in 1972 and the same number again in 1973. In 1974, he raised that total to 19, and two months into the current season, he was moving along at roughly that same pace.

Grich's desire to perfect his skills, and his willingness to take advice, ingratiated him with his teammates. "He came to you and picked your brain, right from the beginning," says Mark Belanger. "He was a professional right from the start."

Ironically, in light of his respect for Belanger, it was the shortstop job that Grich coveted initially—and probably still covets. But, as Frank Lane says, "The only way to beat out a Mark Belanger is to hope he gets old before you do." Grich has, however, already achieved an honor among shortstops that Belanger (whose feats with the glove are often overshadowed by his weaknesses with the bat) has never been able to attain. In 1972, his first full year in the majors, Grich not only started in the All-Star game—but played the whole game at shortstop.

Earl Weaver was the American League manager that year. The players voted Luis Aparicio of the Red Sox to the starting team and Weaver chose "Campy" Campaneris of the Oakland A's and Toby Harrah of the Texas Rangers as alternates. "But when they got to Atlanta," Grich recalls, "Aparicio said he was hurt. Then Toby Harrah said he was too hurt to play, too. Weaver could pick a replacement. I was leading the Orioles in hitting, so he picked me.

"Then, the day of the game, there was a luncheon, and a writer comes up to me and says, 'Do you know you're starting the game at shortstop tonight?' Well, I couldn't believe it. I'd been playing both short and second, and even a little bit at third and at first. I thought for sure Earl would start Campaneris. Obviously, Campaneris did, too. When he heard I was starting, he said, 'Well, I don't want to play at all then. If I'm not gonna start, forget it.' So, I ended up playing the entire game.

"Sometimes," he adds, "Earl's mind sure moveth in mysterious ways."

In the final game of the two-game series with Chicago, the Orioles beat the White Sox again, with some last minute heroics from Grich and Don Baylor, the leftfielder. With the score tied, 2-2, in the last of the ninth, Grich singled, then scored on Baylor's triple.

Grich supplied even more excitement against the California Angels that weekend. In the first game of a twi-night doubleheader, the score was tied 0-0 in the bottom of the ninth inning. With two out and nobody on, Grich came to bat.

"No," Earl Weaver growled later. "This time it did not occur to me to pull Bobby Grich for a pinch-hitter."

Grich came through like a perfect good-luck charm. He hit a home run to win the game. ■

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ALLEN
15

BY MARTY BELL

YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN

At ten minutes to five on the 38th day of the 1975 baseball season, Dick Allen walked into the Philadelphia Phillies clubhouse and onto a red carpet that had not been laid specifically for him. Dave Cash, the Phillies' second baseman, spotted Allen first, threw his denim tennis hat down on a table and yelled, "Hot damn! I just lost $1,000! I bet Bowa you weren't gonna show."

The silence lasted only a second or two. Then Allen broke into laughter, then the rest of the Phillies, and in an atmosphere a world away from the grim uneasiness that engulfed most of his career, Dick Allen was home again.

With a broad grin fixed on his rough, unshaven face, Allen signed a few baseballs, took a pile of mail out of his mailbox and walked over to the locker that had a sign with his name fastened above it. He was about to slip into the Phillies' red pinstripes for the first time since the last game of the 1969 season. Six years ago, those pinstripes were made of flannel; now they are double knit. Six years ago, the team played in Connie Mack Stadium; now they play in Veteran's. Six years ago, the owner was Bob Carpenter, the manager was George Myatt and the stars were Johnny Callison and Deron Johnson; now the owner is Ruly Carpenter, the manager is Danny Ozark and the stars are Dave Cash, Greg Luzinski and Mike Schmidt. Six years ago, Allen's first name was Richie; now it is Dick.

Only two of Allen's 1969 teammates — Terry Harmon and Tony Taylor — were still in Philadelphia, and the new Phillies were a young, spirited bunch. Tug McGraw, the ebullient reliever obtained from the Mets in the off-season, offered Allen a gift: John Denver's album, "Back Home Again." Cash offered Allen a bed in his apartment if he preferred not to make the long drive to his Perkasie, Pa., horse farm.

But Allen had almost always gotten along with the players on the four teams for which he'd worked. It was the fans and the press who made him appear nervous as he peeled off his rich-looking, leather-trimmed brown leisure suit and began to put on his baseball gear. He was not alone in his concern. On the six o'clock news, Tom Brookshier, the football player turned sportscaster, would ask the fans to give Dick Allen a chance and treat him as they would like to be treated. The uncertainty, the threat of unpleasantness, made Allen speak quietly, in phrases rather than sentences. "I've played ten years. Seems twice that long," he mumbled. "It's taken fifteen years off my life."

Allen's troubles began in 1965, in his second season, right after he was the National League Rookie of the Year. In the midst of a hot Independence Day weekend, made hotter by violent racial riots on Philadelphia's North Side, Allen and teammate Frank Thomas got into a battle outside the batting cage. Allen punched Thomas in the nose and Thomas slugged Allen with his bat. The next day, the Phillies put Thomas on the "irrevocable waivers" list. Spurred as much by the tensions in the town as by the incident, the fans began to abuse Allen. When he

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HOME AGAIN

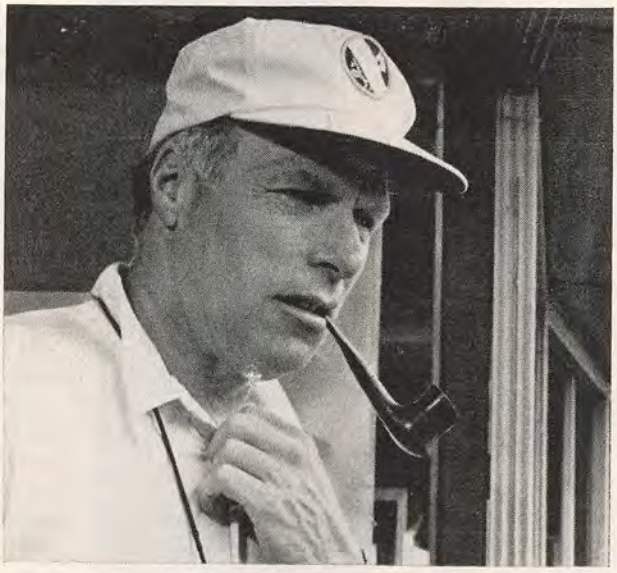
CONTINUED

took his position in left field, he was bombarded by paper and fruit and beer cans. He took to wearing a batting helmet when he played the field, a practice he has maintained. Fans smeared paint on his car, shot BBs through the windows of his home and drove across his lawn.

In 1966, 1967 and 1968, injuries cost Allen a month each season, and fans (and even his manager, Gene Mauch) openly wondered whether a more dedicated player would have have missed so many games. Then, one day in 1969, Allen missed another game. He was at the race track in New Jersey, claimed he got caught in traffic, and failed to show up for the first game of a twi-night doubleheader at Shea Stadium. Owner Bob Carpenter promptly suspended him, manager Bob Skinner objected to the interference from his boss, Skinner was fired immediately and, when the season ended, Allen was traded to St. Louis.

In 1970, he had a good year for the Cardinals, hitting 34 home runs and driving in 101 runs. He stayed out of controversy in St. Louis, but the Cardinals decided to emphasize youth and defense and shipped Allen to Los Angeles for a pair of youngsters. He was initially shocked by the deal and told his mother, "They're trying to run me out of baseball, but I won't let them."

Allen had a good season for the Dodgers, too, hitting 23 home runs while playing half his games in vast Dodger Stadium, and driving in 90 runs. But Walter O'Malley considers his team a family and expects his players to also be public relations men. Allen never quite fit that mold, and after one season he was traded to the Chicago White Sox for Tommy John and Steve Huntz. Distressed by the two deals in two years, Allen seriously considered retiring at the age of 29. But Chuck Tanner, the White Sox manager, was an old friend from western Pennsylvania, and Allen's mother told him he couldn't let a friend down. He didn't. He had his best season ever in 1972, hitting 37 home runs, driving in 113 runs and batting .308. He won his only Most Valuable Player Award, made an otherwise mediocre team a contender—and asked to be called Dick. "Richie reminds me of Philadelphia," he said.



Richie Ashburn, once a star with the Phillies, willingly served as a messenger between Dick Allen and baseball.

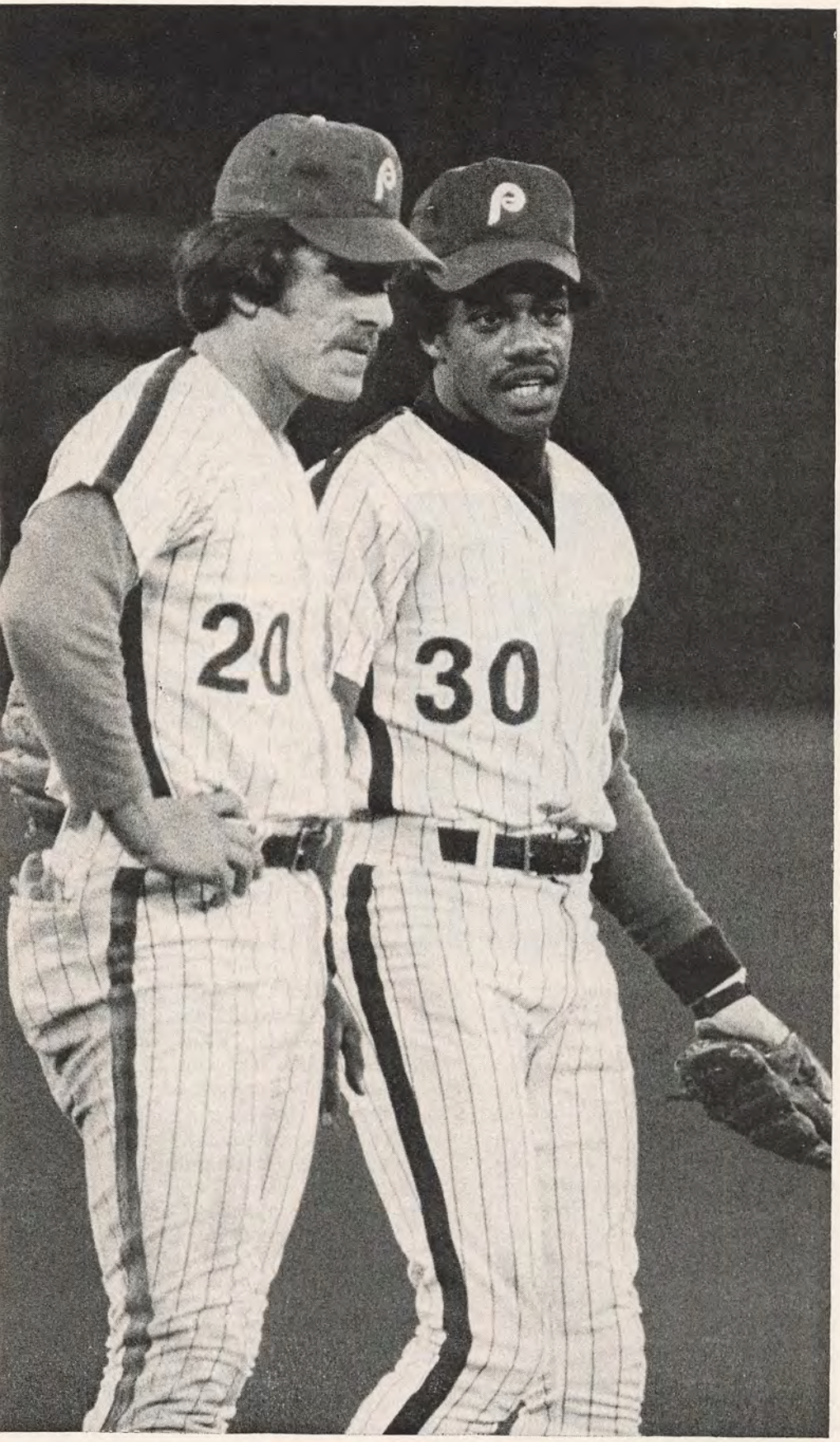
The following season, 1973, Allen broke a bone in his left leg in August and was finished for the season. Last year, he got off to a good start, but the team didn't, and with 34 games remaining, he announced he was retiring. He mumbled about Tanner having to make special rules for him and putting himself in a precarious situation with the rest of the players. But what seemed to persuade Allen to retire was the pressure of being the fulcrum of a team struggling to stay out of last place. "I wear a uniform and I have to make a contribution like everyone else," he says. "But that doesn't mean I have to carry the whole team."

The rest of the Phillies had been out on the field for 25 minutes when Allen came out for batting practice. He looked a bit heavy in his tight-fitting uniform and he wore a red, wool turtle neck dicky, despite the heat and humidity of the night. He walked into the batting cage and attempted three bunts; all three rolled foul. Then he straightened up and began lashing line drives all over the field. Allen's hands are wide and stubby like a boxer's and his wrists whip in the middle of his stroke like the flippers on a pin-ball machine. Some of the players said his swing seemed a bit slow, but the untrained eye couldn't see it. Hitting a baseball is one of the most difficult exercises in sports, but Allen is a natural hitter. He missed a good part of spring training in three different seasons, and each season hit close to .300 and drove in more than 100 runs.

He took his ten swings, grabbed his wornout, patched-up first baseman's glove and ran out to right field where he could avoid the crowd of reporters.

Johnny Bench sat in the visitors' dugout watching Allen in the outfield. "It was a good move for them to make," the Cincinnati catcher said. "Our team would have never taken him. They worry about what has happened in someone's past. We have no long hair and no mustaches on this team. That's our style and the fans in Cincinnati seem to like it. But the Phillies are a very talented loose team. Allen can't hurt them. He can only help."

The Phillies finished batting practice and headed back to the clubhouse. Allen sat down in front of his locker. Richie Ashburn, a former star centerfielder with the Phillies and now their radio broadcaster, walked over.



HOME AGAIN

CONTINUED

"Will you do our pre-game radio show?" Ashburn asked.

"You got yourself a man, Richie," Allen said.

"Just call me Dick," shot back Ashburn.

Don Richie Ashburn was, in a real sense, the man who guided Richard Anthony Allen back to Philadelphia.

After Allen left the White Sox last August, Roland Hemond, Chicago's general manager, felt he had no choice but to trade him. During baseball's winter meetings, the Yankees reportedly negotiated a deal with the White Sox, but the trade could not go through unless Allen was waived through the league. He wasn't; the deal died.

Then the Phillies offered Hemond outfielder Bill Robinson and cash for Allen. The deal depended on Allen's sending a telegram to the Phillies saying he would play for them. Instead, he sent one to the White Sox saying he'd never wear a Philadelphia uniform again.

Finally, the White Sox dealt Allen to the Atlanta Braves for $5,000 and a player to be named later. Allen resisted: He insisted he was retired from baseball and would never go to Atlanta. He had been the first black to play minor-league ball in Little Rock, Ark., and that was enough of the South for him.

"Atlanta didn't want me as a player, they wanted me as a drawing card," he says. "They wanted me to come in and knock down the fences as Aaron had. I can't do that. In Chicago, it got to the point where they expected too much. It would be the same way in Atlanta."

Someone mentioned the Yankees

Mike Schmidt and Dave Cash visited Dick Allen at his horse farm and helped convince him that he could come home again.

and Allen said, "Yeah, I would have liked to play there." A little while later, someone mentioned Oakland and he said, "That's where I would have liked to have played." With either team, Allen would have been *a* star instead of *the* star. "If I had it to do all over again," he said, "I'd like to be a utility man. Just play the game, work hard and then be left alone."

Richie Ashburn got involved in the search for Dick Allen while Atlanta still had hopes of holding onto Allen. Ashburn set up a meeting between Allen and the Braves' general manager, Eddie Robinson. But Allen's uncle died and he cancelled the meeting. Robinson kept trying to set another date, but Allen had no telephone in his house and could not be reached. Ashburn drove out to the farm each week to see what Allen was thinking.

"If I did anything for him, it was to keep his pipelines opened," Ashburn says. "He is almost an exile where he lives. I played messenger."

The message was clear: Under no circumstances would Allen join Atlanta.

How about Philadelphia? Allen asked Ashburn to bring some of the Phillies out to his farm, just to chat. In January, Ashburn came out with Dave Cash and Mike Schmidt. "I wanted to convince him," Ashburn says, "that this was a different team in a different atmosphere."

The team indeed was different. Even without Allen, it was the best Phillies' team since Allen's rookie year (when they blew a six-and-a-half-game lead with 12 games to go). Dave Cash was surprised at the kind of things Allen wanted to discuss. "He wasn't interested in personalities," he said. "He asked if we were strong up the middle, who was in the rotation, who was in the bullpen. All questions that tell if you can win. He wants more than anything else to be where he can win."

Ashburn told owner Ruly Carpenter of the meeting and Carpenter made an offer to Atlanta. But the Braves still expected Allen to join them. On March 20, during spring training, the Phillies practically gave up any hope they would get Allen. Manager Danny Ozark, who was suffering from the flu, acknowledged that no deal was imminent and said, "Now I can eat again, sleep again and put back some of the weight I've lost."

But the Phillies hadn't completely given up. They just didn't want to raise false hopes among players and fans. Quietly, they continued to pursue the Braves.

On Saturday, May 3, the Phillies announced they had traded first baseman Willie Montanez to the Giants for centerfielder Garry Maddox, clearing a position for Allen. But Carpenter insisted the Allen deal was still indefinite. Three days later, it was definite. The Phillies sent minor leaguers Jim Essian and Barry Bonnell, plus a player to be named later and cash to Atlanta for Allen and reserve catcher John Oates. After six years, four trades and two retirements, Dick Allen was coming home.

"I don't want to put any pressure on my manager," said Paul Owens, the Philadelphia director of player personnel, "but we have to have the best team in the league."

The public address announcer read the starting lineups for both clubs. When he got to the fifth slot in the Phillies lineup, a message on the scoreboard read, "Welcome Home Dick," and nearly 31,000 fans stood together to applaud. When the Phillies took the field, Allen stood smoothing the dirt around first base, still wearing his batting helmet, and the 31,000 stood and cheered again.

Pete Rose, leading off for the Reds, lined the first pitch straight at Allen at first base. Allen took it on one hop and ran to the bag for the putout. Another ovation.

Joe Morgan came up next, and hit a high bouncer to Allen. He took the ball on two hops and flipped it to pitcher Steve Carlton, but Morgan beat the play. Johnny Bench popped up ten feet outside the right field foul line and Allen made the catch. And then, with Tony Perez at the plate, Carlton picked off Morgan; Allen made the tag. In his first inning, he had handled the ball on every play. He got his fourth ovation as he ran off the field.

As the Phillies came to bat, the lineup, with each man's batting average, flashed on the scoreboard. In the very middle of the order was Allen's name, with a blank for a batting average.

With two out, Garry Maddox singled and took second on an errant pick-off attempt. Then Greg Luzinski singled him home. Now the drama built. Allen stepped into the batter's box to his fifth standing ovation. He wore batting gloves on both hands. He fidgeted with his helmet and his glasses. And he rocked back and forth on each delivery from rookie Pat Darcy.

With the count two and two, Darcy threw a fast ball low and away. The umpire called it a ball and Bench quickly jumped up to discuss it. Now the count was full and everyone in the place was clapping. Darcy delivered, Allen swung and lashed a line drive into center field for a base hit. Standing ovation number six.

The space next to Allen's name on the scoreboard went from blank to 1.000.

As if to emphasize the drama, Sparky Anderson, the Reds' manager, immediately came to the mound, pretending to talk to his pitcher, actually castigating the umpire for not calling Allen out on strikes. Anderson was quickly thrown out of the game.

The next batter, Mike Schmidt, made the third out and so, in the context of the game, Allen's hit was unimportant. But it was a moment to remember, dramatic proof that you can come home again.

"This is an event," said Tug McGraw. "I wish I was on the Braves when Aaron was going for 714, so I could have been part of it. I'm glad to be part of this."

Allen led off the fourth inning and lined out to center field, only to receive his seventh standing ovation. Before the sixth inning, the baseball quiz went up on the scoreboard asking who was the last Phil-

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HOME AGAIN

CONTINUED

lie to be selected rookie of the year, and when the answer, Dick Allen, appeared, the crowd roared its approval again.

Allen led off again in the sixth, bounced to Pete Rose at third, and was then replaced by Tommy Hutton. The Phils went on to win, 4-0. It was a game full of excitement—two pick-offs, two runners thrown out at the plate and a manager thrown out of the game—but all that was secondary. The climax of the evening was Allen's single.

In order to avoid a crush around his locker after the game, the Phillies set up a press conference with Allen in a separate room.

Allen walked in, already dressed in his leisure suit, accompanied by Danny Ozark. He stood behind a podium covered with a dozen microphones, his car keys dangling in his hand. Ozark stood next to him in his undershirt, his hands dangling uneasily at his sides, a smile resting uneasily on his face.

Allen, finally, relaxed. "This is just plain terrific," he said. "You don't know what it means to me. This is an entirely different atmosphere."

"Everyone has an opinion of me formed in their mind before I even shake hands with them. I don't know them, but they think they know me. So the game has pushed me into a shell.

"But this is really different. This is fun."

The conference broke up. Allen picked up his attache case and walked out toward the elevator. The first person he saw as he left was Richie Ashburn. They grabbed each other's hands and Allen put his arm around Ashburn's shoulders.

"We're gonna be all right, Richie," he said. ■

THEY CAN ONLY CRY ONCE

BY LEON MANDEL

Betty Rutherford at Indianapolis (top) and Sandee Kunze at Carson City share similar hopes and dreams—and fears.

Betty Rose Hlyer Rutherford sat on a scoring stand just high enough to allow her to see clearly over the parallel concrete walls that stand between the broad front straight at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. She sat there for just over three hours watching her husband, John, scream by 175 times. When he went by the stand on which she sat, perhaps 75 feet distant, he was traveling at nearly 210 mph. At 210 mph, a hot dog wrapper blowing across his face shield, a drop of oil on the race track, a stone thrown up by the car ahead, turbulence, a crosswind, rain . . . a thousand things big and small, could have sent John Rutherford and his 1500-pound car into his wife's scoring stand so fast neither husband nor wife could have had time to realize their life together was about to end.

Worse, the car could have launched itself toward the crowd. Betty Rutherford would have had to watch that, as Salt Walther's family watched his car slam into the spectator fence at the start of the 1973 race and burst into flame. She would have had to see his green McLaren crumple on impact, bounce in the air, more than likely turn into an ugly ball of flame and black smoke—and then, she would have had to remain expressionless until she knew if he had survived.

Sandee Lee Kunze stayed away from the Tahoe Carson Speedway most of last year because her emotions come too easily to her public face. Husband Jerry Kunze won 11 main events in his late model Sportsman at T-Car and was the runner-up for the track championship, but Sandee Lee could no longer sit in the grandstands nor stand in the pits. She was disgusted at overhearing the outpouring of bitterness about her husband's success.

Two women: One the wife of an Indianapolis champion, one the wife of an obscure small track racer, and for all their differences they have much in common. Both are tough-minded, both independent, both ambivalent about their lives, although neither will admit it. Their problems are alike, differing not in quality but in scale.

Betty Rutherford is a small-town girl, brought up in Osgood, Ind., where if you weren't a cheerleader you weren't anybody. She was a depression child, the product of a frugal, strict family. Her pleasures were simple, her ambitions necessarily restricted. She knew the hopelessness of becoming a doctor, although that was her dream, and thought herself fortunate that her family could afford to send her to nursing school. The head of the surgical nursing service at Methodist Hospital volunteered to work at the Speedway one May and took Betty with her. It's understandable that Betty Hlyer was receptive. In the first place, the 500 is the event of the year in Indianapolis. The only event. The city's hometown-

CRY

CONTINUED

hero writer, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., described a typical growing-up year in Indianapolis as "364 days of miniature golf and a 500-Mile Race."

And then, of course, there were the drivers: Many of them single, and most of them cosmopolitan by Indiana standards—perhaps a more devastating commentary on the insularity of the city than even Vonnegut's. By 1963, when she met rookie Johnny Rutherford, Betty could say, "I was not a young chickie off the street, I did know the score just a little bit."

Being something beyond a young chickie off the street came from her work as a surgical nurse. Human blood is as much the stock in trade of a surgical nurse as a typewriter ribbon is to a secretary. Her special memories of her job center around the precise and carefully defined work of the surgeons. She was then, and is now a perfectionist.

Then, too, there was the experience of being around race drivers during the brutal 30 days they spend at the Speedway in preparation for the race—the inhuman daily tightening of nerves in response to the building tension for what is one of the biggest payoffs in all of sports. Under that kind of pressure, race drivers, who are a pretty loose lot anyway, are capable of acting like Devil's Island inmates on a 24-hour pass in Las Vegas. That would explain Betty Hlyer's knowing the score.

Sandee Lee Pitta grew up in Oakland, right in the middle of the city. There was a lot to do there, but much of the time was spent trying to avoid most of it because it was unpleasant. Her father was strict, as was Betty Rutherford's, and he chose to move the family to Carson City, Nev., where life was easier, less intense, less threatening. At Carson City High School, Sandee Lee rebelled. For a year, feeling deprived of friends and deprived of the excitement, she deliberately alienated her classmates. And then, having proved that she was stubborn, she gave up and found that life was not so bad after all—particularly since a tall, good-looking Colorado kid named Jerry Kunze had taken to asking her out. Kunze belonged to a backwater high school stratum known these days in Nevada as "goat ropers"—kids brought up on ranches and filled with the ranch work ethic. Sandee Lee Pitta was aware that

To Sandee Kunze, her husband's car is "the other woman," a rival for her husband's time and affection and checkbook.

Kunze was into cars, but she knew something about her own span of concentration when it came to fads, and she was sure that Jerry would outgrow cars soon enough. They were married when she was 17. That was 11 years ago. And Jerry Kunze never did outgrow cars or racing. These days at T-Car Speedway in Carson City, one of his competitors is a man in his late 60s. Sandee Lee Kunze sighs a lot when she thinks of that.

You could say Betty Hlyer was calculating. She'd read an article in the paper saying that Rutherford the rookie was unmarried; when she went out with him on their first date, he ordered a big steak. These two seemingly unrelated facts said a lot to nurse Hlyer. "I didn't want to marry someone who was entirely broke and I didn't date people I couldn't consider for marriage." But there was more: "I've always been the type of person to seek success and that's probably one of the reasons Johnny and I have been drawn together. He's an achiever."

Early in their marriage, what Johnny Rutherford was most adept at was crashing. Crash-a-Ford Rutherford, they called him, or sometimes Crash-a-Chevy Rutherford. He was a charger and what he charged into too often was the wall. He was making some progress in Indianapolis cars, but most of his driving was being done in the sprinters, considered by the majority of race fans to be the most dangerous race cars ever invented. A sprint car looks as though it came right from the set of *The Big Wheel* and you expect to see the grinning face of Mickey Rooney staring at you when the driver takes off his helmet. They are relatively short-chassied, upright, front-engined cars of classic race car shape. They are powered by a variety of engines, mostly Chevrolet; run on both dirt and asphalt tracks almost always shorter than a mile. Their starts are frequently "inverted" which means the fastest qualifier starts last. They are the staple of the thousands of short tracks like T-Car Speedway in the United States, and they are so dangerous that some drivers won't get closer to them than the upper row of the grandstands.

It was in a sprint car that Johnny Rutherford had his worst accident. In the mid '60s, a rock flew up from the back wheels of a car in front of him and knocked him out. His car went up over the wall and he sustained a variety of injuries. The worst were two shattered arms that meant the certain end of that year's racing and very possibly an

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CRY

CONTINUED

end to his racing career.

Now it could be expected that as a nurse, Betty Rutherford would be able to cope with a badly injured husband. What couldn't be expected was the intensity of her reaction. They had discussed the possibility of injury when Johnny proposed and the discussion turned into an all-night dialogue. He said to her then she'd have to accept things as they came. And now, as she repeats some of what passed between them that night, she smiles. "He told me, 'You know, when I'm out there, I know what I'm doing and all the other guys know what they're doing.' He said, 'You take your life in your hands when you get out of bed in the morning. If you're going to worry all your life, you're going to be a mental disaster.'

"I bought that then," she says. "I believe it now."

During that year after the crash, something else sustained Betty and Johnny Rutherford. "We've always thought there's a reason things happen as they do. We've always had a belief there's somebody else kind of governing. . . ." That year Jud Larson and Red Riegel were killed in a sprint car race Johnny probably would have run. That year Don Branson and Dick Atkins were killed in another sprint car race and in that race, Rutherford would certainly have driven. He was scheduled to be driving Atkins' car.

"Two broken arms," Betty Rutherford says. "At the time it seemed like the end of the world. Johnny would have to start over again. But I think that year, as hard as it was on both of us, was meant to be."

What Betty Rutherford does not say is that during John's despair that year, she encouraged him to go on. Only a slight push in the direction of retirement would have been required; maybe just failing to contradict the hopelessness, the profound depression. That was not Betty Rutherford's way. She had married John as a race driver and she meant to see that he succeeded in what he had set out to do.

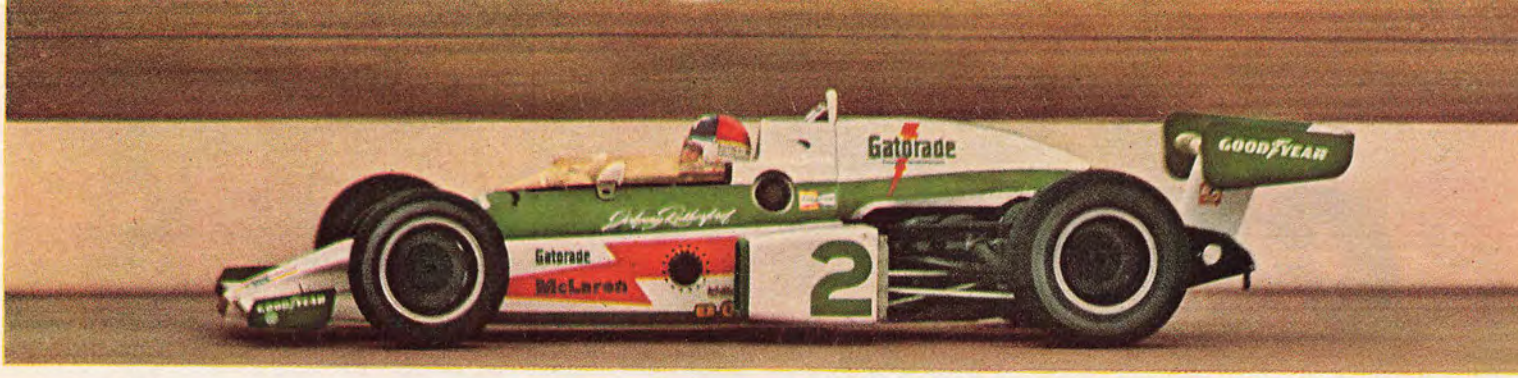
Sandee Lee Kunze's agonies were of another kind. She did not marry a race driver and she certainly did not count on a race car being her rival. Jerry was a plumber. Racing was supposed to be only a hobby. But every night he came home, went into his garage and worked on his race car. "At first I thought Jerry and Jerry's friends were just little boys playing with cars. I saw racing people as wearing leather jackets with shrunken skulls painted on the backs." She soon learned otherwise. "The car became the other woman and I deliberately made him miserable in front of his friends and in front of his friends' wives." But then one day she went to the track and sat next to some people who didn't recognize her. They were obscene and loud—criticizing her husband. "Suddenly, a very strange feeling came over me. I felt proud of him and of the car and at the same time I was *aware* of these totally contradictory feelings going on inside of me. On the one hand I was making it difficult for Jerry, on the other hand I was very proud of him."

The feelings continue to this day. Sandee still calls the car "she" as in "She has her own checkbook with her own picture on the checks," and there is nothing cute or coy about the tone of voice. There is a strong trace of venom there and one suspects it will never go away.

Although she is a mother (Alana, nine; Jeffrey, six; and Tanya, three) and a housewife and content to be both, she is outspoken in her resentment of the confinement both children and house impose. "I'm an individual," she says, "and I'm losing my identity in this house. I tend to resent the fact that a wife is known only through the identity of her husband."

Betty Rutherford seems more than a model wife. She had three miscarriages before her son, Johnny, was born. Her younger child, a daughter named Angela, was adopted. Betty, who remains a Mary Kay cosmetics consultant, devotes time to a home for unwed mothers, teaching the girls makeup in the hopes of restoring some of their self-respect. She is active in the P.T.A. at her son's school in River

Johnny and Betty Rutherford are a team at the race course; he does the driving, and she is a proficient, accurate scorer.



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CONTINUED

Oaks, Texas, a Ft. Worth suburb. She considers her mother-in-law "one of my best friends." To be useful to her husband, she learned the arcane art of keeping lap charts and received a hard-earned USAC scorer's license. Today, she is considered so proficient in keeping times and positions in a race that she not only handles all the McLaren team scoring, but members of rival teams often check with her to determine their own driver's standing.

Racing, for the spectators and indeed for the whole town in which an event is held, is a carnival. Often, particularly in Rutherford's league, a race is surrounded by the atmosphere of Mardi Gras. An Indianapolis champion, past, present or future, wades through invitations to every conceivable affair, public and private. You travel first class. You eat in first class restaurants. Someone is always there to pick up the tab.

And then there are the women. The intensity of the women who pursue race drivers is matched by few others in few other sports with the exception, perhaps, of bull fighting. Wives know that. Wives know too what the pressure is like. As one recently dead Grand Prix driver said, "In racing, it's not a matter of a mistake meaning a loss of 15 yards. In racing, a mistake can ramify itself into something terminal." The pressure of making a mistake of that magnitude can be the cause of a no-holds-barred social life, a complete live-for-today attitude.

Racing wives struggle to cope with this fact. For Sandee Kunze, the car is the other woman. If there are, in fact, other women in Boise or at Lakeport, she seems not to want to know. Asked pointblank, Sandee Kunze says that when other women are attracted to her husband, she takes it as a compliment.

Betty Rutherford says the same thing.

Sandee Kunze is small, dark, intense, naive and totally open. She finds it extremely difficult to hide her emotions—and they are strong. Her husband's racing is minor league, but no less serious than Rutherford's and she takes it no less seriously. It is mainly confined to one track in Carson City, one of the best of its kind, but still a small track in a small town.

The result is that Sandee Kunze finds it hard to see beyond her spotlessly kept tract house, Jerry earned about $4,000 in purses and sponsor support in 1974 and spent over $8,300. She cannot imagine what it would be like to see him graduate to John Rutherford's level.

In 1974, from racing alone, Johnny Rutherford, the Indianapolis 500 champion, made almost $400,000 and it is a rule of thumb that you double that to include endorsements, speaking engagements and the like.

What all that money means to Betty Rutherford is the same house in River Oaks in which they've lived for some time, a private school for Johnny ("One thing you can give your kids is the best education possible"), clothes from Neiman-Marcus, a loaded Olds station wagon and lots and lots of diamond rings. It also means the constant glare of publicity, and Betty Rutherford is very good at dealing with that. Her poise is enormous, her public presence faultless.

Jerry Kunze, still in auto racing's minors, is 31 and time is getting short. If he doesn't make it by the end of next year, he will never make it at all. Sandee admits ambivalence about that; she wants to see her man succeed, but she remains reserved in her enthusiasm for racing. Johnny Rutherford, at 37, would seem to have made it. Yet, as McLaren's driver, he is well aware that the car he drives is fielded by a team that won not just Indianapolis in 1974, but the World Championship as well. And the World Championship is contested in entirely different cars on race tracks in many of the major countries of the world. Rutherford may be last year's Indianapolis Champion, but the World Champion is Emerson Fittipaldi and Rutherford knows he is too old to begin to learn what is almost literally a different trade: The trade of Grand Prix driving on road courses instead of the ovals where he grew up. Betty Rutherford is disappointed that she will never be a Grand Prix wife, part of racing's genuine elite. Both wives then share a kind of disappointment about the limitations of their husbands' careers.

They also share the threat of widowhood. It is a threat that they have decided to cope with rather than alter their lives. Asked the question about the peril to their husbands and the consequent disasters to their own lives, their answers—two weeks and 1,000 miles apart—were, in some uncanny way, identical: "I wouldn't be able to live with this man and he wouldn't be the same man I married if I didn't agree with his goals." ■

PHOTO CREDITS

Dorothy Affa—12 (top). Jim Anderon—71 (top left). Dan Baliotti/Movement Assoc.—13 (middle), 53 (3), 66. 71 (middle center, middle bottom). Cliff Boutelle—42 (upper left, lower right). Ben Davidson/Tom Keating—16, 17 (3), 22 (top). Kevin Fitzgerald—4 (middle), 12 (bottom left, right), 13 (right), 23 (right), 70 (2), 71 (left bottom, middle top, right), 72 (right). Lewis Franck—59 (top), 62. Buddy Frank—59 (bottom), 60. Richard George—7. Mike Greenberg—4 (right). Fred Kaplan—72 (bottom left). Micki McGhee/ISSS—72 (top, middle left). Paul H. Roedig—55. Carl Skalak, Jr./Opticom—23 (left four action), 42 (upper right), 43. Tony Tomsic—13 (left). UPI—8 (left, middle), 22 (middle), 28, 30. Jerry Wachter—48, 56. Bob West/PhotoTrends—35 Wide World—8 (right), 22 (bottom).

THE SPORT QUIZ!

ANSWERS
From page 8

1—b. 2—c. 3—b. 4—a. 5—c. 6—a. 7—Larsen—1956; Ford—1961; Richardson—1960. 8—a. 9—b. 10—c. 11—b. 12—c. 13—b. 14—a. 15—True. 16—b.

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Chico & His Men

BY SHERYL FLATOW

It began in frenzy, and built toward pandemonium: Almost 15,000 fans, all on their feet, clapping their hands, chanting the name of their latest hero, caressing the name as if it were Mick or Ringo or even Elton.

"Chico! Chico! Chico!"

The site was the Nassau Coliseum, home of hockey's New York Islanders, and in the fourth game of the semi-final round of the Stanley Cup playoffs, the rhythmic chant rang out for Glenn "Chico" Resch, rookie goaltender for the Islanders. Resch stood alone on the ice, isolated in front of his net, awaiting a one-on-one confrontation with Bill Barber of the Philadelphia Flyers, the defending Stanley Cup champions. Barber had just been awarded a penalty shot, hockey's most dramatic play, the most severe test of a goaltender, an unfair match of unchecked attacker against unaided goalie.

"Chico! Chico! Chico!"

The roar built to a crescendo. Barber began his approach from center ice, and as he stormed toward the goal, Resch moved slightly forward, abandoning the crease. Barber came in close, faked right, then skated to his left and fired. He had Resch beat, *if* he got the shot up. Barber didn't. Resch went low; so did the puck. The puck hit Resch's leg pad and deflected to the left side of the net.

The noise was deafening.

"CHICO! CHICO! CHICO!"

No one dreamed the Islanders would end up in the Stanley Cup semi-finals—and Chico Resch in the heart of the action.

Before the start of the 1974-75 hockey season, the only thing more unlikely than Glenn Resch emerging as a genuine hero in the National Hockey League was the New York Islanders emerging as a legitimate championship contender. Resch was one of the most obscure players on one of the league's most obscure teams, a team which had finished last in its two previous seasons in the NHL, and a distant second to the Rangers in the affections of New York fans. In fact, most of the people who paid their way into the Nassau Coliseum during the regular season did so because Ranger tickets were as scarce as Islander victories. And when the Islanders played at home against the Rangers, the cheers of the fans were predominantly for the visiting team.

But by the closing month of the regular season, an amazing transformation had taken place. The fans in the Coliseum had shifted their loyalties, had become overwhelmingly Islander fans.

And, even more remarkably, the fortunes of the Islanders had shifted, too. In just their third season in the NHL, they found themselves not only battling for a playoff spot, but fighting the Rangers for second place in their division in the last week of the season.

It was almost inconceivable. The Islanders had started the season with nothing to boast about except Denis Potvin, their second-year defenseman, the top selection in the 1973 amateur draft and the most heralded junior since Bobby Orr. Worse yet, under the league's realignment, the Islanders were placed in a division with the Flyers, the Rangers and the Atlanta Flames, the toughest division in the league. The Flames joined the NHL when the Islanders did, but they had made it to the playoffs in 1974.

But in 1975, the Islanders not only beat out the Flames for a playoff spot, but finished with the same point total (88) as the Rangers.

And then the Islanders stunningly eliminated the Rangers from the playoffs, taking their three-game preliminary series. Suddenly, this unheralded team was transformed into a colorful club, a young club which relied as much on determination as on talent; a club which was surprisingly intelligent; a club which understood its limitations but did not know its limits. And when they went on to beat Pittsburgh in the quarter-finals, coming back after losing the first three games of the series, and took Philadelphia to seven games in the semi-finals after falling behind by the same margin, there was no doubt which New York team was the team of the future.

On October 7, 1972, the New York Islanders skated on to Coliseum ice in their NHL debut—and fell flat on their faceless faces, los-

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Chico CONTINUED

ing to Atlanta 3-2. The result would be repeated 59 times more that season, although usually the score was nowhere near so close.

General Manager Bill Torrey's theory was to go with youth, to sacrifice the present for the future. But, for the Islanders, the future seemed light years away.

"We had absolutely no system, no discipline," says Billy Harris, the team's original No. 1 draft choice. "It got to be a joke. When we'd play any of the better teams, we *knew* we were going to lose. It was just a question of how bad."

"We had a saying," adds Gerry Hart, a defenseman who came to the Islanders in the 1972 expansion draft. "If we had a win, two close losses and a tie, we were on a streak."

By the most generous definition, the Islanders did not put too many streaks together that season. Their 60 losses, 347 goals-against and season-ending total of 30 points set an NHL record for incompetence (a record broken this past season by the Washington Capitals).

Still, Torrey stuck with the youth movement. By the end of the season, four of the team's 1972 draft picks—Harris, Lorne Henning, Bob Nystrom and Garry Howatt—were in Islander uniforms and Torrey was looking toward the June draft and the prospect of signing Denis Potvin.

But the most significant signing in the team's brief history occurred on June 10, 1973, when Torrey signed Alger Joseph Arbour as coach. Arbour replaced Earl Ingarfield, who had succeeded Phil Goyette during the first season.

As a player with four NHL clubs and as coach of the St. Louis Blues, Al Arbour was known for his dedication and no-nonsense attitude. A defensive defenseman in his playing days, he naturally stressed defense as a coach. Arbour made it clear from the start he not only wanted to make the Islanders respectable, he was intent on molding them into a playoff team.

"He made us believe in ourselves," says Billy Harris. "He solidified and unified us, made us into a team. He taught us the fundamentals. He taught us to skate, to forecheck, to be physical."

Arbour's influence was evident in his first season. Strengthened defensively by Denis Potvin and his brother Jean—acquired from Philadelphia at the end of the 1972-73 season—rookie Dave Lewis and veteran Bert Marshall, the team cut its losses by 19 and its goals-against by 100. The Islanders wound up with 56 points, almost double their first season total, and were rarely blown out of a game.

Despite the Islanders new-found respectability, there was no reason to set grandiose goals for the 1974-75 season. The team had remained virtually intact for the new season. The only change, which hardly seemed major, was that rookie Glenn Resch replaced veteran Gerry Desjardins to back up Billy Smith in goal.

The Islanders got off to a quick start and three weeks into the season, were leading their division, a feat which astonished the Islanders themselves.

"When we started the season, we were very much in doubt about our own ability," says Billy Harris. "Then, after the good start that first month, we began to think, 'Holy mackeral! This is for real.' Clubs weren't afraid of us, but they were giving us a little more room than normal because we were physical, we were checking."

Just before mid-season, though, the club went into a tailspin and when the new year began, they were struggling to stay out of last place. Although they were only three points in back of the second place Rangers, their youth and inexperience had them doubting their own ability.

Then, on January 5, Torrey traded Doug Rombough and Ernie Hicke to Minnesota in exchange for forward J. P. Parise. Less than 24 hours later, Torrey dealt forward Craig Cameron to the North Stars for another forward, Jude Drouin. Torrey had pulled off a pair of heists worthy of Willie Sutton.

"Those trades were the turning points of the season," says Gerry Hart. "At that point, we were doing rather poorly and we weren't sure whether we had the horses to carry us through the stretch and the playoffs. When J. P. and Jude arrived, we had a team meeting, and both of them were instrumental in giving us direction. One of the points they made was that the teams around the league really respected us. And I don't think anybody was really aware of this. I think it was at that point that we started to believe in ourselves."

For the next three months, the Islanders continued to wage a three-way battle with the Rangers and Flames. On March 29, with just five games remaining, the Islanders beat the Rangers, 6-4—their first win all season over their Manhattan rivals—and moved into second place, a point ahead of the Rangers.

The Islanders needed just two more points to clinch a playoff spot and they next faced a home-and-home series with Atlanta. They managed a 2-2 tie at the Omni in Atlanta, and then, on April 1, they duplicated that score at the Coliseum. The Islanders were in the playoffs.

On the last day of the season, the Islanders still had one thing to prove. They had lost to the Flyers the night before, ending their hopes for second place. (Even if they finished with the same point total as the Rangers, the Rangers would end up in second because they'd won more games.) They were playing the Rangers at Madison Square Garden that final day, and they had never won a game there. The Islanders wanted a victory for their morale.

Once again, they came through. Again they beat the Rangers, 6-4.

They finished the season tied in

Chico CONTINUED

points with the Rangers, the seventh best total in the league. Six players had scored at least 20 goals, twice as many as the year before. But the most astounding statistic of all was that the Islanders wound up with the third best goals-against average in the league, behind Philadelphia and the Los Angeles Kings. Billy Smith, who'd played in 53 games, finished with three shutouts and a goals-against average of 2.78 and Glenn Resch, in 25 games, also had three shutouts, and a mark of 2.47.

"For the last six weeks of the season," says Gerry Hart, "every game was crucial. We got used to pressure. Everyone said we were a young, inexperienced team with no playoff experience, but we had been playing playoff games six weeks before the season ended."

"I would have to say that the Rangers took us too lightly in the playoffs," says Gerry Hart. "It didn't seem to matter to them that we'd beaten them twice at the end of the season. They made like those games weren't important. But they were to us, especially the last game of the season. It was the first time we'd ever won in the Garden and it gave us a great mental lift."

Hart's assessment was particularly true in the Islanders' first playoff game at the Garden. Going into the third period, the Rangers were ahead, 2-0, and seemed well on their way to victory. But, as was often the case during the regular season, the Rangers let up in the third period. And, as was often the case during the regular season, the Islanders seized the advantage. Five minutes into the period, Billy Harris scored, and seven minutes later, on Jean Potvin's goal, the score was tied. Less than two minutes later, the score was untied; Clark Gillies, a six-foot-three rookie forward who accumulated 112 points and 179 penalty minutes in his last season in the juniors, put the puck past Eddie Giacomin.

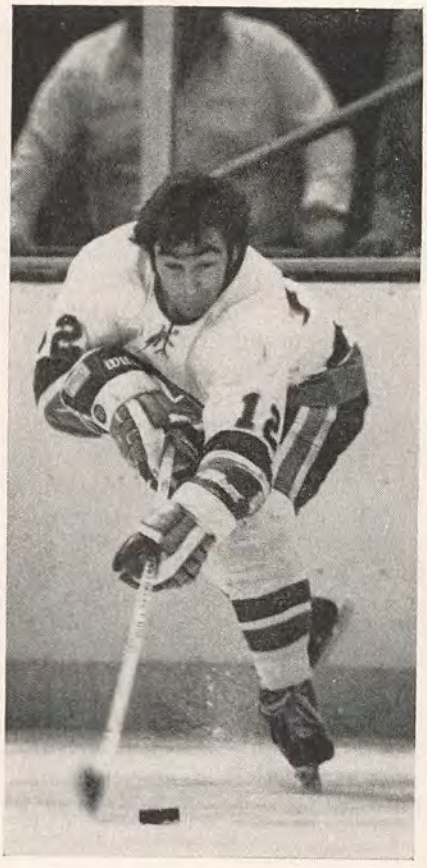
The Rangers came back to tie it up at the Coliseum, embarrassing the Islanders, 8-3. It was a game in which the Islanders set a record for most penalty minutes, and a game which saw Glenn Resch—who had played so well two nights before—driven from the nets after surrendering six goals on just 13 shots.

So the two teams moved back to the Garden for the game which would mean the end of the season for one of them. Gilles Villemure started in goal for the Rangers; Billy Smith started in the net for the Islanders.

The Islanders took a 1-0 lead on Clark Gillies' first-period goal, and when Denis Potvin scored twice in the second—prompting Ranger coach Emile Francis to replace Villemure with Giacomin—it looked like the Islanders would eliminate their rivals and coast to the quarter-finals.

This time, though, the Rangers came back. Spurred by Giacomin, the older team took charge. At 4:44 of the third period, Billy Fairbairn scored. At 13:27, he scored again. Fourteen seconds later, Steve Vickers came through with the goal which would send the game into overtime. The Islanders had been completely outplayed by the Rangers for the last 20 minutes, outshot, 14-4.

The referee dropped the puck between Jean Ratelle and Jude Drouin to start the overtime period. Drouin won the faceoff and passed the puck to Bert Marshall. Marshall passed to Dave Lewis, who sent the puck into the Rangers' end. With a couple of Rangers out of position, the puck came out to Drouin, who passed to J.P. Parise at the right side of the net and Parise put it in. It took the Islanders just 11 seconds of the overtime period to capture the hockey championship of New



York City.

"The Islanders won't win another game all season," predicted Derek Sanderson after the Islander victory.

For a while, Sanderson looked like a prophet.

The Islanders were still soaring when they entered the quarter-final round against Pittsburgh. They came down fast. They lost three straight to the Penguins; Billy Smith surrendered 14 goals.

"None of us really knew what was happening all through the playoffs," says Denis Potvin. "Most of us were floating on a cloud. From one series to another, we were mesmerized by the fact that we had accomplished so much. And when we'd start each series, we weren't thinking of the other club. We were thinking, 'Wow! This is great! We're really here!' We'd go out and play, but we weren't concentrating. But when we found ourselves with our backs against the wall, we were suddenly aware of what we had to do. And we went out and did it."

In the fourth game of the Pittsburgh series, Arbour decided to start Resch, who hadn't played since the 8-3 loss to the Rangers. The Islanders responded with a 3-1 victory; Resch made 37 saves. In the fifth game, with Resch in the nets once more, the Islanders won 4-2, the first time they'd ever won at Pittsburgh.

Game six was played at the Nassau Coliseum, where the Islanders were greeted with a banner reading, "Remember 1942 Maple Leafs." The Maple Leafs were the only team in NHL history—in fact, in all of pro sports—to win a playoff series after dropping their first three games.

The Islanders won, 4-1, a game much closer than the score. In the last minute of play, the Islanders got two empty-net goals. The hero, beyond question, was Glenn Resch. He was brilliant throughout, particularly early in the third period when the Penguins were threatening to tie the score.

Resch's teammates call him Chico partly for his swarthy complexion, partly for his *bandito* mustache and partly because he lived in a Long Island apartment building nicknamed the U.N., which had many Spanish-speaking tenants.

Resch enjoys his nickname —and almost everything else about life. He is an affable and articulate young man who cannot hide his emotions—on or off the ice. At five-foot-nine, he is small for a goalie, but he compensates with skill, determination and sheer exuberance. ("I know it sounds trite," he says, "but I would have played in the playoffs for nothing.") All these qualities, combined with the suddenness of his development, worked together to make him not only the most popular Islander, but also the symbol of their success. And Resch and his teammates achieved their greatest success in the seventh game of the quarter-finals, at Pittbsurgh.

For the first two periods, the Islanders sat back and watched the Penguins swarm all over Resch,

When Jude Drouin and J. P. Parise (facing page) joined the Islanders in mid-season, the team gained experience—and confidence. Bert Marshall (#6), Denis Potvin (#5), coach Al Arbour (in suit) and Clark Gillies (on the bench) helped, too.

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Chico CONTINUED

throwing 25 shots at him. Once again, he was outstanding, and the teams went into the third period scoreless. Then, with just five minutes left in regulation time, two Islander veterans, Bert Marshall and Ed Westfall, combined for the only score of the game.

Resch didn't skate off the ice; he danced. The Islanders had pulled off the most stunning comback in sports history. At that moment, nothing seemed impossible—not even the Philadelphia Flyers.

Once again, the flying Islanders fell flat. Once again, they found themselves very quickly in the embarrassing position of being down three games to none.

"Believe it or not," says Resch, "we were much looser being down three games to the Flyers than to the Penguins. The day after we lost to Pittsburgh, our practice session was very quiet, very solemn. But after coming back like we did, when we went down against Philly and came to practice the next day, everyone was loose. We felt we could come back. That's how much confidence we gained in the course of that one series."

"Al wanted us to believe that the playoffs are fun," says Gerry Hart. "And we did. We just wouldn't buy that 'there's-no-tomorrow-if-you-don't-win' philosophy. Of course there's a tomorrow."

The Islanders' tomorrows began in the fourth game, the game Resch stopped the penalty shot. The Islanders took a 3-0 lead, but the Flyers caught up and appeared to have won when Reggie Leach slipped the puck past Resch at the buzzer. But the officials ruled that time had run out before the puck went in. There was no goal. Given a second chance, Jude Drouin scored at 1:53 of the overtime period to send the series back to Philadelphia.

In the fifth game, the Islanders devastated the Flyers, and Clark Gillies devastated Dave Schultz, the hatchet man for Philadelphia. With Resch playing probably his finest game in goal and the Islander offense at its best, they won easily, 5-1. The icing on the puck came with just 22 seconds left in the game, when Dave Schultz squared off with Clark Gillies. The two dropped their gloves and Gillies immediately began to pound Schultz's face. With his teammate so totally helpless, Moose Dupont was forced to come to Schultz's aid.

Afterwards, a subdued Schultz commented, "You learn that there are certain guys in the NHL you shouldn't mess with. I just found out that one of these guys is Clark Gillies."

The Islanders returned home for the game that could—unbelievably—tie up the series. The crowd rose to their feet to greet the Islanders as they took the ice, but were silenced a minute and 42 seconds after the game began when the Flyers took a 1-0 lead. The Islanders tied it up later in the period, and, early in the third, Gerry Hart scored a power-play goal to give the Islanders the lead. Resch shut out the Flyers the rest of the way, and long after the team had left the ice, much of the crowd was still chanting, "Chico."

The seventh game at Philadelphia's Spectrum was more than a game. It was an event.

Ten minutes before game time, the Spectrum's maintenance crew opened the door behind the net Glenn Resch would be defending in the first period, and rolled an organ onto a strip of red carpet.

Then the Spectrum lights were dimmed, the crowd roared, shadow images of the Stanley Cup danced on the ice and, finally, Kate Smith stepped out. Kate Smith in person—for the first time in a year. Kate and her recording of "God Bless America" are called upon whenever the Flyers need some extra luck. Only in extreme emergencies is Kate asked to do her thing in person. This was definitely an emergency; and for a mere $5,000, she graciously made the trip from her home in Florida.

The Islanders were ready for her. As she stood there, waving to the crowd, Islander captain Ed Westfall skated up and presented her with a bouquet of flowers and planted a kiss on her cheek. One-by-one, the rest of the Islander team skated over to Kate and shook her hand.

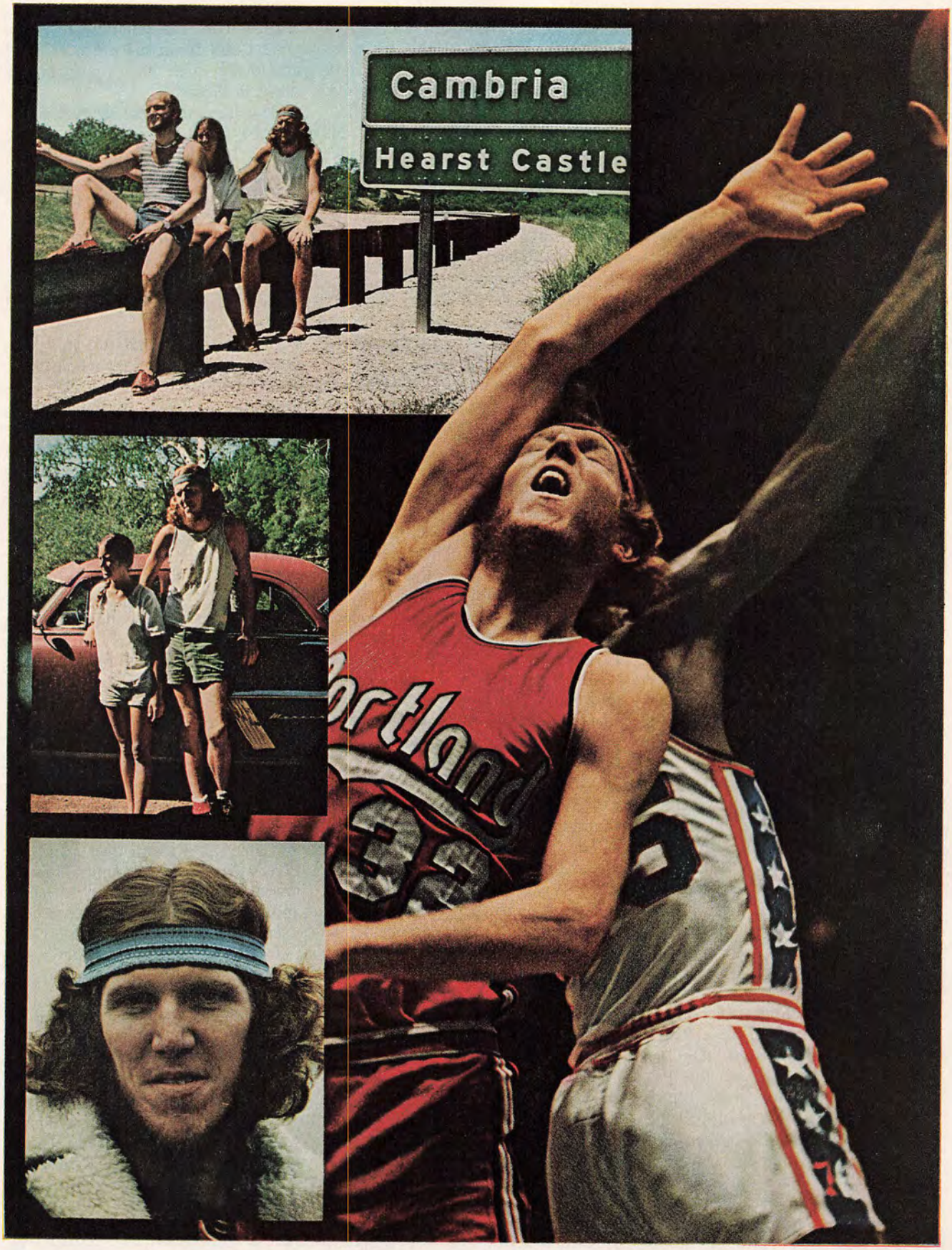
When the game finally got underway, the Flyers took a 1-0 lead in 19 seconds.

"I hate to admit to it," says Glenn Resch, "but that whole thing really bothered me. It's very difficult for a goalie to build up to one starting time and then have to wait fifteen more minutes for a game to begin. A goaltender needs total concentration. He's got to be able to shut everything but the game out of his mind. But you can't do that with Kate Smith there. I think it's great that she does that, but the Flyers could have showed a little more courtesy by having her set up in front of their crease."

The Islanders must have realized the hopelessness of the situation as soon as Philadelphia scored. After playing three phyical, aggressive games, games in which their defense had the Flyers totally handcuffed, the Islanders went totally flat. They stopped skating, they looked lethargic, they looked like they knew it was all over. And the Flyers kept flying all night. They allowed the Islanders just 15 shots and broke the Islander defense consistently. Philadelphia won, 4-1.

In the Islander dressing room after the game, the initial mood was one of disappointment. But that mood quickly changed to one of pride. "The greatest thing about this season," said Gerry Hart, "is that in just three years we put together the nucleus of a winning hockey team. We gained poise, confidence. And when we go to training camp, we're not gonna be just shooting for the playoffs. We're gonna be looking for the Stanley Cup."

For the Islanders, it wasn't the end. It was only the beginning. ■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The rookie year of Bill Walton was a quiet one—but only on the basketball court. Off the court, he was surrounded by close friends and by controversy, ranging from his hurts to the Hearsts.

A VISIT WITH BILL WALTON ...& FROM THE FBI

BY RALPH BARBIERI

It was uncharacteristically sunny for a March afternoon in Portland, Ore. I had arrived quite early and no one was at home. I sat cross-legged atop the warm cedar boards of the deck overlooking the Willamette River and propped my neck up against the huge glass doors of the A-frame house owned by Bill Walton.

William Theodore Walton III. The six-foot-eleven redhead who became a national figure at the age of 17, led UCLA's basketball team to an NCAA record 88 consecutive victories along with two national championships and won the Sullivan Award as the country's outstanding amateur athlete of 1973. All of this, and at the same time establishing himself as a counterculture hero by demonstrating his affinity for the outdoors, meditation, vegetarianism, the peace movement, Bob Dylan, long hair and jeans.

When Walton signed a $2.5 million long-term contract a year ago with the Portland Trail Blazers of the National Basketball Association, spurning an even larger offer from the rival ABA, the mood in Portland was one of rabid optimism. Season ticket sales soared, and management and fans envisioned their perennial last-place club turning into an instant contender.

This was, however, not to be the case. As his first professional season drew to a close, Walton, plagued by injuries, had played only sporadically. The sunless winter disconcerted him, and he complained of ailments ranging from extreme physical coldness to a much discussed bone spur (later rediagnosed as strained ligaments requiring a walking cast). Many basketball fans argued that bone spurs were extremely common injuries, and, since they were normally only slightly painful, did not impair most professional athletes' ability to play. In addition, to maintain the purity of his body, Walton had refused the painkilling drugs many pro athletes take as a normal course of action.

Consequently, stories began circulating that he wanted to leave Portland to play elsewhere or perhaps not to play at all, that he was not living up to his contractual obligations, that his strength and stamina were decreased as a result of his meatless diet, that he was, among other things, a malingerer and a spoiled crybaby.

Eventually, Sam Gilbert, once Walton's counselor, emerged as the source of some of these stories. Gilbert, an affluent Los Angeles financial advisor who seemingly had a direct pipeline to former UCLA coach John Wooden's prize pupils, had reportedly issued some statements that had violated Walton's confidence, and others that Walton considered blatant fabrication.

Apparently, Walton had told Gilbert, in confidence,

that, primarily due to the lack of sunshine, Portland was not for him and that he was considering chucking the whole thing. Gilbert somehow leaked this information to the press. Walton subsequently disposed of Gilbert as his advisor. Gilbert later informed the *New York Times* that Walton had tried to break his contract, and suggested that he was faking his injury. The *Times* article quoted Gilbert as saying, "Knowing his hostility to Portland, the players, the coach, and the management, he will try and leave again."

The controversy reached mammoth proportions, and nearly all of the resultant publicity was highly critical of Walton's beliefs and alleged actions. In fact, much of the media coverage could be characterized as outright malicious. It was reported that Walton was "ripping off" the franchise, and that Portland's management, players and fans alike would be satisfied with nothing less than his head on a platter. Walton was commonly referred to by the press as "flaky" and "weird," or, at best, as "confused" and "enigmatic."

Consequently, when I first met Bill Walton late last January at the Oakland hotel where the Trail Blazers were staying prior to their game with the Golden State Warriors, I was quite surprised to find him in very high spirits, quite self-assured and anything but confused. His overall demeanor that afternoon seriously threatened the validity of my preconceived notion of him as a bewildered post-adolescent.

I spoke to Walton for only an hour or so then, a comfortable, easy chat. A month later, I called him from my home near San Francisco to inquire about the possibility of doing an in-depth story about the values and convictions of Bill Walton the human being, as opposed to dealing with those allegations that had been leveled against Bill Walton the basketball player. He replied that he would certainly have no objection to something of that nature, and that if I wished to get a realistic look at his lifestyle, I would be welcome to spend as much time as I liked with him at his home in West Linn, just outside of Portland.

So there I sat gazing at the tranquil Willamette, contemplating how it was even remotely possible for one 22-year-old to stir up so much controversy, and how I might be able to effectively capture the complexity of his character. My reverie was interrupted by the sound of a car in the driveway.

The car door opened and out came what were assuredly the two largest crutches ever constructed, followed directly by an appropriately-sized bearded young man attired in a plain brown sweater, jeans, headband, one beige hushpuppy and one white plaster cast.

Bill greeted me cordially and introduced me to the two people who were with him: His girlfriend Susan Guth, whom he referred to as "Sooz"; and Don Salera, a close friend who, along with Jack Scott and Jack's wife Micki, lived with Walton as his "family."

The Scotts, I was told, were away on a trip and would not be back for a while. I had no idea that by that time they were actually "underground," and that the elements of still another controversy mentioning Walton as a possible link with Patty Hearst and the SLA, as a result of his relationship with the Scotts, would begin to unfold during my visit.

As we strode up the stairs, we were greeted by Sigmund, the Scotts' gigantic 12-year-old German shepherd who, in spite of his advanced years, was still in excellent voice. The sign on the front door requested that guests refrain from smoking and remove their shoes as they enter.

Walton suggested that I make myself at home and take a look around while he went off to make a couple of phone calls. As he hobbled out of the room, he asked, "Sooz, do you think you could fix up some kind of a quick meal before we have to leave for the game?" "Sure, Bill." "Thanks."

It struck me that the immensity of the house and its proportions were in sharp contrast to the sparsity of its furnishings.

The side of the house facing the river rose to nearly 30 feet at the peak of the A-frame, and was constructed totally of glass, including, of course, the doors that opened out to the deck. There was a large stone fireplace bordered on both sides by crowded bookshelves, and nearly everything else was made of wood.

The doors, cupboards, counters and the like were built to suit someone standing six-foot-eleven. The stove and oven were enormous, and there was a sunken bathtub that converted into a four-man whirlpool.

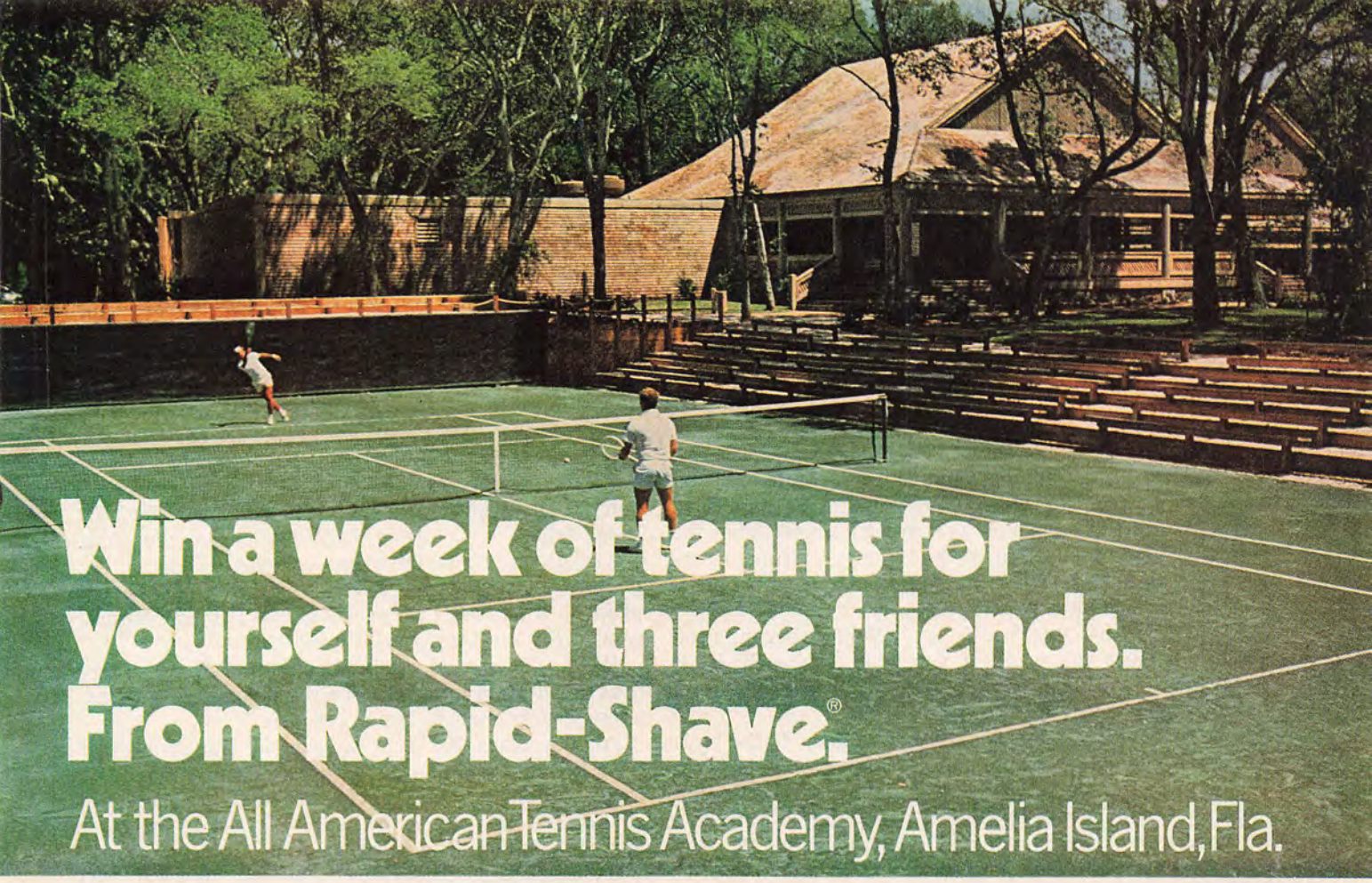
The furniture in the living room consisted of a large round table, a couple of chairs, a desk, matching striped couches, a stereo, a tiny portable television, and an attractive rug ("It's really good for doing yoga on," remarked Sue) in front of the fireplace.

Posters suggesting a predilection for causes and philosophies of a liberal nature were in evidence in the hallways and elsewhere. Upstairs, where Bill and Sue spent their restful hours, there was a meditation altar holding a likeness of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

None of the bedrooms, interestingly enough, had beds in them—only thin mattresses flat on the floor.

All in all, quite a fascinating place. But the obvious incongruity of the dimensions of the house itself to Walton's purportedly simple lifestyle was such that it didn't really surprise me when, as we all headed for the dinner table, Bill mentioned that he had begun to consider the possibility of moving (a possibility which is now about to become a reality).

In 20 minutes, Sue had dutifully prepared supper—a large kettle of steaming vegetable soup, served along with a salad of fresh greens and some homemade



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bread. Walton thrives on nourishing food, and during my stay it seemed as though he was eating incessantly.

Although we were obliged to dine quickly since we were in danger of being late for the game, everyone had more than a sufficient amount to eat, with the exception of Bill who decided to take another bowl of soup with him in the car.

As we drove into Portland, it occurred to me that the controversy in which Walton had been embroiled for the past several months stemmed largely from the fact that his conception of the function of sport in society was radically different from that of most people. I asked him about it.

"If you kick somebody's ass," Walton began, "you get whatever you want. If you beat up somebody, if you humiliate them, if you win at any cost, then you get whatever you want.

"That kind of reasoning," he explained, "is the basis for our economic system, and in a capitalist society like ours, sports, like so many other things, is a reflection of the economic system. That's the way it is in this country right now, but I don't feel that that's the way it should be."

When Bill speaks, it is in slow, deep, soothing tones conveying an air of insouciance that belies the sense of expressive concern reflected on his face. As his jaw drops to form his words, his brows rise and his eyes widen. He looks directly at you, and the fervor in his speech is communicated in such a way that it is felt rather than heard.

Walton then went on to articulate the purpose of sports as he saw it. "I feel that the place of sports in society should be as a means of drawing people from different backgrounds closer together, a means of having fun, and a means of promoting better health—for the masses, not for just a few.

"There are a lot of things wrong with professional athletics," Walton continued, "but since the people who are associated with the big business elements of sports are calling the shots right now, changes are going to come slowly. However, I'm not going to let the sports establishment impose their ideas on me.

"For instance, doctors nowadays tend to experiment on athletes. Very little research has been done on pain-killing drugs like cortisone and butazolodin that are given to athletes today. Their long-range, even their short-range effects are not fully understood, and I'm not going to risk my body on someone's experiments.

"All that I can really do right now is to make my own decisions, and, as I go along, I'll try to educate as many people as possible. Hopefully, I can play basketball for a long time and educate a lot of people along the way."

Since the emphasis placed on winning is an integral aspect of anyone's philosophy of sport, I asked Walton his views on the importance of victory.

"It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game." He *actually* said that. While the statement may not have been a sparkling tribute to his sense of originality, he said it in a way that led you to believe he did more than just pay lip service to the concept.

"If you play good, you feel good," he said. "If you play badly, you don't feel so good, but there's always tomorrow to play another game. It's fun to win, but I don't let it make me incredibly high. And I don't let losing bring me way down. I just like to play the game. I get high on playing the game—playing it right.

"I'm not saying that I don't play to win," he explained. "I *definitely* play to win, and I try my hardest to win. But once it's over, it's over.

We finally arrived at the Coliseum. Bill got out of the car and went into the arena through a door marked, appropriately enough, "stage entrance."

As I watched the Trail Blazers all but dismember the Cleveland Cavaliers, my gaze frequently wandered toward the Portland bench. Walton, in his street clothes, sat there stoically, hardly saying a word or making a gesture throughout the contest.

Sidney Wicks, the Blazer's All-Star forward, and LaRue Martin, Portland's back-up center, along with their wives, Andra and Claudia, dropped over the house after the game. The conversation consisted almost exclusively of shop talk; Walton said little and remained pleasant but subdued. Finally, draping himself over the couch, he fell into a deathlike slumber, an occurrence which, while hardly striking me as an exemplary manner in which to entertain one's guests, seemed to be of no consequence to anyone present.

I subsequently asked Walton about his passivity both at the game and afterwards. "You see," he began, "I love basketball, and I wish more than anything that I could be playing right now. But I'm injured . . . so I can't. When I am able to participate, I get very emotionally involved both in playing the game and in talking about it. But when I'm not playing, I don't. It's probably mostly just my way of controlling the frustration of not being able to play."

Shortly after awakening the next morning, Don Salera informed me that, earlier on, he had observed an officer from the local constabulary break into my car by using a coat hanger to undo the lock, and then begin to search it. When Salera had confronted the policeman, he had mumbled some feeble story about checking out a stolen-car report and hastily departed.

Now since my automobile was an extremely uncommon older model with out-of-state license plates, I knew that the likelihood that it could be mistaken for an-

other was virtually nonexistent. The idea that it had been illegally entered and searched disturbed me, and I asked if this were a common occurrence. Salera replied that while he hadn't seen the police do anything that blatant in the past, he had noticed for some time that they'd been keeping the area under surveillance.

I reasoned that the security measures probably had something to do with keeping passers-by from lingering around the house. So, although I was less than enthused about what had happened, I decided, in keeping with that well-known American tradition, that nothing could be done about it, so I might as well forget it.

Bill went off to practice and Sue left to run some errands. I was glad to have the opportunity to spend some time with Salera, since he was going to be leaving in a couple of hours for Berkeley where he was to resume both his studies as a forestry major and his work as an instructor of Transcendental Meditation.

Salera, an easygoing unassuming fellow, had been a good friend of Walton's ever since they met as freshmen at UCLA. I could sense that they were quite close, and yet there seemed to be very little verbal communication between them. Salera confirmed my observation and went on to explain it.

"Heck, Bill and I have gone on hiking trips together and not said a word for four or five hours. We're just good friends, and most of the time talking isn't necessary. We just enjoy being with each other."

I would come to discover that there were numerous people from all walks of life who loved Bill very dearly. Friendship is of tremendous significance to Walton, and Salera had touched upon what I would learn to be the inherent nature of the relationship that Bill shares with his friends: They are totally comfortable while in each other's company. What they really communicate to one another is their very being, their essence, which has nothing whatsoever to do with what they happen to be saying or doing. Consequently, there is a tacit understanding that nothing is required of them other than to act exactly as they feel at the time—whether that means walking in silence, engaging in philosophical debate, doing cartwheels down the hallway or falling asleep on the couch.

Salera and I were still alone in the house when there was a knock on the door. Salera answered and found himself facing two FBI agents. They asked if Jack or Micki Scott were at home. They next inquired about Bill and Sue. Then they asked if they could speak with Salera for a while. He explained that he was just on his way out to catch a bus to Berkeley. They said that some agents would be contacting him in Berkeley, and asked that he have Walton give them a call.

The two visitors also asked if anyone else were at home, and I remember feeling secretly relieved when Salera answered, "Just a friend . . . a writer who's here visiting Bill," and didn't identify me by name.

We met Bill and Sue shortly thereafter, and apprised them of what had taken place. Walton called his attorney, Charles Garry, and then called the FBI, telling them to direct their inquiries to Garry. I asked him if he was free to tell me what was going on. Walton replied that the FBI was quite concerned about locating the Scotts and felt that he probably knew where they were—but that in fact he did not.

I was aware that a few years ago, when Jack Scott was the athletic director at Oberlin College in Ohio, some of his ideas had inspired Vice President Spiro Agnew to label him "an enemy of sport."

I also knew that Scott had written some rather controversial books dealing with athletics, and thought that perhaps he was being sought in order to be taken to task for some particularly radical position he may have espoused in a recent publication. Obviously, my deductive powers left a good deal to be desired.

At any rate, after rushing Salera to the bus terminal, we headed off for the privacy of a sequestered corner of the park not far from Walton's house. There, sprawled on the lush green grass, Bill embarked on a discussion of his concept of social responsibility.

"We live in a very troubled society," he said, "and the only way to build a better one is to build better individuals. I believe that whatever problems there are, the only way they can begin to be solved is by each individual taking the responsibility for changing himself.

"If everyone would be conscious of getting themselves in balance with nature," Walton asserted, "a much better social system would evolve. The only things that keep our society from being beautiful are the restrictions that people place on themselves. Individuals limit their own development by doing things like polluting their own atmosphere, taking drugs, eating improperly, and, most of all, by closemindedness."

I asked Walton to explain what he felt to be his personal sense of responsibility. "People in our society for some reason tend to adopt the values of others, especially those of public figures. So if they have to follow someone's example, perhaps they can follow mine. I'll just keep talking about living properly and harmoniously, and maybe some people will listen."

That evening some friends of Walton joined us for dinner. Michael and Kay are the proprietors of Nature's Food & Tool, the organic foodstore which serves as Bill's sole source of supplies and his second home.

Abraham and Rachael (who bear some resemblance to their Old Testament namesakes) are an interesting couple who, among other things, do some freelance writing on various "relevant" subjects. Abraham was a teaching assistant at UCLA while Bill was a student there. Walton was, parenthetically, quite a good student. Some faculty members tried to interest him in becoming a Rhodes Scholar, but he declined.

Unlike the previous evening, Walton's guests were relatively soft-spoken and not at all flamboyant. There wasn't a speck of make-up or a drop of after shave to

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be found amongst the lot, and all were vegetarians. As might be expected, their interest lay, not in sports, but in more topical issues. Abraham, for example, was quite outspoken in his criticism of the government, and Bill offered some very opinionated views of his own.

"Right now," Walton remarked, "I don't have any faith at all in our government. Actions like threatening the Middle East with the use of nuclear weapons if we don't get all the oil we want are totally counter-productive. Improper use of natural resources by the government is destroying the environment. Government food regulations and policies are horrendous.

"If practices like these continue, almost anything could happen . . . famine, nuclear war . . . the possibilities are unlimited.

"The only way that each of us can change ourselves for the better," he went on, "is if we are educated as to the proper course of action to follow. In this country, for the most part, the government has taken on the responsibility for education, and I blame the government for their failure to educate the people conscientiously."

As we finished supper, Walton articulated what he felt to be at the core of his contentions. "The reason that the government has done such a miserable job," he stated emphatically, "is that it is not really representative of the will of the individuals in our society. More and more people are beginning to realize that the government that we supposedly elected is not on our side. In a capitalist system, the government makes decisions based solely on economics, on loyalty to big business—not based on concern for the well-being of the general public."

Walton did make it clear that he was basically very optimistic with regard to the international political climate. "Politically and sociologically," he explained, "there are a lot of good things happening around the world today. For example, there are a lot of struggles for liberation, like those that are going on in Indo-China, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. Previously, struggles of this nature were always beaten down by the power of the large capitalist countries like England, Spain, France, Portugal and, most recently, the United States. But lately, in the '60s and '70s, the oppressed people are rising up and are actually starting to win . . . and I think that's great!"

The conversation continued well into the night, and by the time everyone was ready to leave, it had managed to circuitously touch upon just about every subject known to man—with the exception of basketball.

The sun shone brightly the next day as I accompanied Walton into the city to attend practice. He seemed completely taken with the beauty of the surroundings. Bill's love of the outdoors was apparently acquired at an early age. He told me that he and his family had gone on numerous camping trips, frequently journeying into the deserts of southern California and Arizona.

Bill's father is a social worker, and his mother a librarian. He credits his parents with instilling within him the ideal of man's humanity to his fellow man, and with being influential on the development of his other values as well.

Later on at practice, Walton passed the time speaking with a local newspaperman.

Partly due to the influence of Jack Scott, Bill's attitude toward the press has been more conciliatory of late; in fact, he almost appears to enjoy doing certain interviews. Nevertheless, most media people seem bent on prodding Walton to explain his actions, and he doesn't really feel as though it is incumbent upon him to explain himself to anyone. This attitude is often mistaken for arrogance, when it is actually nothing more than a reflection of Walton's inability to understand why he should be called upon to justify his personal convictions. Besides, he sees his behavior as very straightforward, and can't understand why it has been portrayed as "enigmatic" in the first place.

On our way home, we stopped by Nature's to pick up some food. As Walton tabulated the cost of his purchases, we talked briefly about soaring prices and the economy in general. This was the only mention of finance or money during my entire visit. In fact, with the marked exception of the house itself, there were no signs of material wealth to be found anywhere.

Walton's clothes, his cars (a Jeep and a Volvo sedan), his meals, his activities, and, moreover, his entire lifestyle are simple and unostentatious. By all outward appearances, he is one of the few people who *has* money, but is not driven by it—the apparent reason for this phenomenon being that he genuinely does not seem to need it.

When we arrived home, I joined Walton upstairs as he flung open his bedroom's sliding glass doors. He leaned back shirtless, gingerly balancing his chair on its two rear legs, and ravenously devoured every available particle of the sun's warmth.

Meanwhile, Sue was downstairs preparing some banana smoothies. Smoothies are refreshing concoctions made by mixing fresh fruit and juice, in this case bananas and apple juice, in a blender for a few seconds.

After explaining some of the different combinations of fruit that could be used in preparing the drink, Walton launched into an extended dissertation on his eating habits. His diet is rather obviously of critical importance to him. It is an integral part of his lifestyle, and his feelings regarding food are shared by all those with whom he lives.

Bill's diet is considerably more rigid than that of

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most vegetarians. The determination of what he does or doesn't eat extends far beyond the fact that he is vehemently opposed to the slaughter of animals. Not only does Walton eat no meat, fish, poultry or dairy products, he also consumes nothing containing any additives or preservatives—not even tap water.

"Most people in this country are junk food addicts," he asserted. "Most junk foods are loaded with sugar which has a very damaging effect on the body. A lot of friends of mine have had a real tough time trying to cut sugar out of their diets. Tests have been conducted that show that the reason for this is that sugar itself is definitely physically addictive.

"Also, most of the meat that is eaten contains poisons that are present because the animals have been shot up with steroids and other crap, force fed, and then brutally killed. A lot of other foods contain poisons as a result of having been processed and refined, which means that nutrition is taken out and restricting chemicals are put in.

"I believe," he said firmly, "that continually taking these poisons into our bodies over long periods of time can eventually cause cancer and premature death. You know, billions of dollars are being spent on finding a cure for cancer, when more of an effort should be devoted to trying to prevent it in the first place."

I knew that Walton had changed his diet a couple of years ago, and asked what had actually precipitated the change. "Friends and books," he replied, "but mainly personal experience. For instance, ever since I was a kid I've spent a good deal of time in the desert. Eventually I began to feel this incredible contradiction. It just didn't seem right to be enjoying the beauty of the natural environment of the desert, and at the same time to be consuming unnatural foods like a Coca-Cola or a dead animal.

"I used to eat hot dogs and ketchup and french fries and steak and junk like that. I did that, and I know what *that's* like; and I've done this, and I know what *this* is like. This is definitely better . . . a *lot* better."

As our supply of sun and smoothies simultaneously became exhausted, we prepared to leave for a dinner and meeting of the local chapter of the United Farm Workers. The UFW is one cause that Walton espouses publicly because "it is a good example of a working-class liberation struggle against the ruling class."

Walton's demeanor at the meeting was generally low-key, although he was obviously quite interested in the proceedings. Toward the end of the meeting, one fellow related a story of how that afternoon, while picketing a store that sold Gallo, he had been surprised when a young boy came out of the store, grabbed a picket sign, and stationed himself next to him. He was even more surprised to find out that the boy was the son of the owner of the store. When asked why he was picketing his father's store, the youngster replied, "Because I like Bill Walton."

The following morning I was awakened by the sultry tones of Joe MacDonald (formerly of "Country Joe and the Fish") as they filtered through the hallway and into my room. I arose to find Bill and Sue reading the paper while sitting quietly in the living room.

Sue, who is 24, has light brown hair that falls down below her shoulders and a slim, lithesome five-foot-eight figure. She usually dresses in a manner similar to Bill's, in jeans and some kind of a simple top, and, naturally, she uses no cosmetics. Bright, affable and pleasing to look at, she is, in her own unobtrusive way, quite a fascinating young woman.

Sue is fun-loving and at the same time practical, easy-going but self-assured, wholesome yet sensual, and straightforward but diplomatic if need be. More significantly, she is supportive of Walton's needs while still remaining very much an individual.

Although Sue and Bill have been together for more than three years, their relationship seems remarkably fresh. When they speak to each other, there is almost inevitably the trace of a smile on their faces; and when one asks something of the other, the dialogue is punctuated with "please" and "thank you."

When I asked Walton how he would express his feelings regarding his relationship with Sue, he answered, "That we're together is all that actually needs to be said. Sue is my closest friend and I feel really high about her. But mostly it's just our being together that says it all."

The president of the Trail Blazers, millionaire industrialist Larry Weinberg, had arrived in Portland that morning. He had made the trip up from his home in Los Angeles to take care of some business affairs. Walton had never had him over to the house, and since there were a couple of things that he wanted to discuss with Weinberg (one of which was the possibility of establishing a natural foods concession at the Coliseum), he had invited him to lunch. Special preparation for "having the boss over" consisted of sweeping the stairs and the entrance hall.

Shortly after Weinberg had seated himself, while Bill and Sue were still in the kitchen, I asked him what he thought of Walton and his iconoclastic ways. "He's great if you like six-foot-eleven redheads with independent ideas," he responded, only half kiddingly. He quickly added, "I do believe that it often takes independent ideas to bring about change, and I think of change as being basically a healthy thing."

When I inquired as to whether or not he felt that the

domain of professional sports was ready for some changes, he said diplomatically, "Yes, it might be ready for *some* changes, and it might not be ready for others." I could sense that I wasn't going to elicit any earth-shaking declarations.

Nevertheless, in spite of his less-than-sweeping endorsement of Walton's personal philosophy, Weinberg, after first giving the impression of feeling slightly ill at ease, obviously ended up enjoying his visit. This surprised me, for I had fully expected that either Walton would be guilty of inconsistency due to altering his normally casual manner out of deference to Weinberg's presence, or else there would be virtually no communication between the two.

Instead, Walton, who appeared to like Weinberg, simply treated him as he would any other guest. The owner seemed to appreciate that, and responded by making himself right at home. He had second helpings of nearly everything on the table, and after lunch, as we left for Portland in the Jeep, Weinberg coyly asked if he might drive, saying that he thought it might be fun to drive a Jeep since he hadn't done so in about 20 years.

The ride was something less than velvety smooth, but Weinberg got such a kick out of it that he was totally unconcerned, at least for the moment, with the fact that Sigmund was both shedding and driveling all over the sleeve of his sport coat. It was a sight to behold: A nattily attired business tycoon driving around in a Jeep with a seven-foot hippie, while a mammoth police dog slobbered all over both of them.

After leaving Weinberg at the Blazers' office and taking Sigmund to the vet for minor repairs, we spent the duration of the afternoon winding wistfully around some of the scenic country roads surrounding Portland.

Portland's atmosphere is one of an overgrown village, and Walton seems to find its lack of sophistication refreshing. He has discovered the people to be, for the most part, open and hospitable; he was planning on spending most of the off-season there.

That evening Sue suggested that we dine at a vegetarian restaurant called The Center for Truth. Walton goes there frequently; in fact it's the only restaurant in town where he will eat.

The people who run the establishment live in a spiritual community just across the border in Washington, where they farm the land that furnishes the food for the restaurant. All of the proceeds go toward the maintenance of the community. Walton showed a great deal of respect for their beliefs, and this led us to a discussion of his notions of spirituality.

"To me," he began, "God is everything in its natural state. You can see God in everything . . . in the forests, the sky, the water, and in us if we are living properly. It's hard to put into words, but, if people are living naturally, the spirit within them comes out . . . it's just a tremendous sense of beauty that you can feel when you're around certain beings."

I asked about the usefulness of meditation. "A lot of people try to commercialize meditation, but to me it's a real personal thing. I try to do some form of meditation every day. It doesn't necessarily have to be done in a certain way at a certain place. I can meditate while I'm staring at a tree, or even during a time-out at a basketball game.

"The nicest thing about meditation," Walton went on, "is that it puts your body in harmony with your surroundings. And that can be real helpful, because when you're a professional athlete, your surroundings can get pretty unharmonious.

"Music is another means that I use to keep myself centered. You see, the kind of music I like creates a certain atmosphere, and that atmosphere turns bad vibes into good vibes."

That night the Coliseum was full of good vibes for the Trail Blazers. They crushed the injury-riddled Phoenix Suns in an extremely sloppy contest. The Portland fans, who are enthusiastic, if not the most knowledgeable in the league, roared their approval.

At halftime, I chatted with some of the local supporters and found that most of the people with whom I spoke appeared to be more sympathetic toward Walton's position than they had been in the past. There was still a good deal of animosity in evidence, but somehow the majority seemed reasonably convinced that Bill was earnest about his desire to play.

After the game I told Walton that, in conversing with the fans, it looked as though much of the harsh sentiment toward him had softened. "Yeah," he responded, "that's true here in Portland and also in San Francisco. When I'm here or in the Bay Area, the people applaud when I'm introduced and I can sense that they're behind me. Actually, Portland fans are very together as far as their understanding of where I'm coming from. That may not be true of the richer fans down below," he said smiling sheepishly, "but I have a lot of friends who sit up higher in the cheap seats."

When we arrived home there was a car waiting in the driveway. The door opened and the slender figure of Tommy Curtis quickly emerged. Curtis, better known as "T.C.," is the little guard known for his loquacity who was Walton's teammate at UCLA. Bill had mentioned that he had called, saying that he might be coming up from Los Angeles for a day or two.

Curtis threw himself into Walton's arms, kissed Sue, and embraced me as we introduced ourselves. T.C.'s emotions were undoubtedly genuine, even though he was at times inclined to display somewhat of a flair for

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the dramatic. "Boy, it's great to be home," he said later as we sipped on smoothies. He had never been to the house before, but told me, "Just being with Bill is like being home to me."

The following day, it rained, and Sue passed the time in the kitchen preparing food for a rare post-game party planned for that evening. Curtis turned on the telecast of the UCLA-USC game; as he did, the phone rang, and Walton answered it. "God, I can't believe that the FBI questioned *them* too," Bill said, as he set down the receiver.

I wasn't aware of precisely what was happening, but I did know that for the past couple of days numerous calls had been pouring in from all over the country. They had been coming from friends and relatives of both Walton and the Scotts.

Bill explained that all of the callers had been interrogated by the FBI in its efforts to ascertain the Scotts' whereabouts. (Curtis, as it turned out, had been questioned by federal agents for hours, prior to his departure from southern California.)

In addition, Walton declared that he was sure that his phone had been tapped, and that he had reason to believe that incoming mail was being monitored.

These revelations left me completely astonished. After hearing all this, I began to suspect that it wasn't the local police department alone who had been responsible for breaking into my car.

Walton looked at me and said, "You've been here for a while now; when you get home, I'll bet they're going to want to talk to you for sure." I distinctly remember feeling my face drop. Somehow, even though you may have nothing to hide, there is still something less than exhilarating about the prospect of being interrogated by the FBI.

Walton was unquestionably quite concerned over the fact that many of his family members and friends, who hadn't even the vaguest notion of what was happening, were being bothered by federal agents.

At this point, it became obvious that whatever was amiss here was of considerably greater consequence than I had previously imagined. However, in accordance with still another renowned American tradition, the desire for non-involvement, I decided that discretion was the better part of valor and asked no further questions. But never in my wildest fantasies did I think of connecting Jack and Micki Scott, whom I associated primarily with sports, with the Patty Hearst ordeal.

That evening we once again dined out, at The Center naturally, and then went on to the game.

The Chicago Bulls were in town, the NBA's most physical team, and the game was hotly contested. Tempers flared frequently, resulting in several technical foul calls on the Bulls, which greatly pleased the throng at the Coliseum. The Blazers won, which pleased the crowd even more.

The party following totally defied the imagination. Until that evening at the Walton residence, I had never seen a Volkswagen bus parked between Porsche Carreras. Nothing went on with the exception of a good deal of friendly chatter, but the cast of characters was right out of a Fellini film.

In attendance were several players and their wives, Larry Weinberg and his wife and children, some of Walton's less materialistic friends, Tommy Curtis, myself, our host and hostess and one or two others.

Their fashions ranged from Saint Laurent to sandals, their financial statuses from independently wealthy to indigent, and their topics of conversation from jock itch to J. Krishnamurti. Ethnic backgrounds and political persuasions were as diverse as could be found this side of the U.N. General Assembly. Walton simply sat back talking quietly with some of his guests and smiling benignly over the entire gathering.

After the assemblage had departed, Bill told me, "A lot of the people who were here tonight wouldn't normally hang out together because they have such different interests." Now *there* was an understatement. "I have all sorts of interests," he continued, "and it's very hard for me to separate them. It's like . . . my politics are part of my basketball and my basketball is part of my politics. So once in a while I invite all of these different individuals over to the house, and it's always really nice . . . they're *all* my friends."

I asked Walton how he went about choosing his friends. "The qualities in a person that are important to me are inner peace and inner happiness," he asserted. "If people are peaceful and happy, you can tell real quick . . . intuitively. You can feel the vibrations."

The next day was my last at the Walton household. T.C. left before I did, wishing everyone well as he scurried off to catch a plane back to Los Angeles. Walton spread himself lazily over the pillows on the living-room floor and switched on the Golden State-Milwaukee game.

I remarked to him that, since he certainly seemed to be a decent sort of fellow, I wondered why so many people felt animosity toward him and characterized him as weird. "Well," he began, "for one thing, there have been a lot of very negative things written about me, but there's really no sense in discussing how all that got started." (Walton has consistently refused to offer any reprisals to Sam Gilbert's attack on his character.) "Basically, most people who dislike me are probably not that happy with themselves; sometimes people tend to attribute their own shortcomings to others. Those who feel that I'm weird are just too close-minded to accept anything that's different. You see," Walton explained, "the general public in this country has been taught in our schools to believe that 'different' is wrong. For instance, one of the most ridiculous things that the government has done is to depict other countries as being wrong if they do things differently than we do. That's what they tried to pull off in Vietnam . . . telling us the Vietnamese weren't doing the right thing

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"Anyway, when people see that I act differently from the way they think a professional athlete should act, they think that that's wrong . . . they can't understand it. Actually, if they would take the restrictive limits off themselves and open their minds up, they wouldn't have any trouble understanding me at all.

"In fact," he continued, "if people would be more open-minded toward others and their beliefs, and would treat their fellow man as they would like to be treated, the earth would be a much better place to live. Individuals would be much more in touch with themselves and with one another; there would be no wars; and everyone would be a whole lot happier.

"But if people want to think I'm weird," he shrugged, "that's okay. I think I'm perfectly sane."

Bill and Sue were going off to spend the afternoon with some friends. I told them that I was just about ready to leave, but hadn't quite gotten all of my belongings together. Walton said they had to be going, but I was welcome to stay as long as I liked.

After thanking them both for their hospitality, I watched pensively from the window as the Jeep wound its way out of sight. Wandering onto the deck, I sat gazing out over the river, as I had on the day I arrived.

There was a sense of contentment about Walton that was considerably easier to feel than it was to express. While most professional athletes frequently found themselves to be the object of idolatry or worship from afar, I had discovered during my visit that a great many people felt a deep affinity for Bill that more closely resembled love than adulation.

As I observed a dilapidated barge making its way down the Willamette, I silently questioned whether or not it would be possible to adequately convey in the written word the true spirit of what I had experienced during those six days.

Bill Walton was undoubtedly a very engaging young man. I found it difficult to envision anyone who knew him well expressing an active dislike for him. It wasn't that Walton was without faults. He would be the first to admit that he had by no means reached Nirvana. He was indeed undeniably inclined to be periodically impetuous and extreme, but whether one agreed with all or none of his convictions, neither his sincerity nor his honesty could be questioned.

It struck me that the controversy surrounding Bill Walton was, just as he himself had said, chiefly attributable to the fact that he was "different." But he wasn't really that *terribly* different.

In fact, had he been a union leader, or a college professor, or a politician, or even a minister, he probably would have created little stir. For some reason, those type of people could make the kind of statements that Walton made without causing much commotion.

What Bill Walton had done that *really* stirred up the populace was to dare to deviate from the norm established for that most sacrosanct of all professionals—the professional athlete. Being a superstar compounded the crime.

But who were the sports figures that had set the "norm" which Walton had failed to live up to? That was easy. They were, of course, legendary heroes like Ruth and Lombardi—revered names spoken in hushed tones—and such contemporary greats as Joe Namath and Catfish Hunter. Yet it was common knowledge that these individuals were hardly unflawed.

It had been frequently reported that Ruth regularly drank himself into oblivion. But that was explained as simply being a part of his flamboyant nature.

Vince Lombardi's use of drill sergeant tactics, as well as his obsessive notion that "winning is the only thing," were easily justified because he did, in fact, win.

Namath's sexual promiscuity has provoked more envy than disdain.

And when Catfish Hunter, immediately after having acquired his "free agent" status, was quoted as saying that he would play for whomever offered him the most cash, hardly anyone raised an eyebrow. The lure of the dollar seemed to be the easiest phenomenon of all to comprehend.

Obviously, most members of society felt that there was nothing intrinsically wrong with those athletes who attached a great deal of importance to such commodities as money, sex, flamboyance, and victory at any cost. In fact, those things were viewed as precisely the stuff that (American) dreams are made of.

But an athlete such as Bill Walton, who was possessed of principles and values that led him to place particular significance in concepts such as inner peace and man's humanity to his fellow man, was perceived as very strange indeed.

In a day when the sports pages, filled with news of strikes and salary arbitration, were barely distinguishable from the financial section, Bill Walton continued to embrace the quixotic theory that the primary purpose of participating in sports should be to foster brotherhood and sound health, and to derive pleasure from playing the game. Once again, his ideas were interpreted as frivolous and peculiar. Still it was difficult to comprehend the reason for the vicious nature of some of the attacks that had been launched against him.

It was only when he made less than flattering remarks about the government, and even went so far as to question the nutritional value of something as traditionally American as the hot dog, that the motive behind the storms of protest and the attempts at character assassination became quite evident.

Walton's comments had disrupted the complacency

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of the advocates of some of society's most deeply entrenched and hallowed ideals, producing, perhaps for just a fleeting moment, the ominous realization that if there were perchance any truth to such unpopular theories as the beneficial nature of a meatless diet or government loyalty to corporate interests, some rather radical changes in thinking might be in order.

In short, many people felt that some of their basic beliefs were being threatened. Consequently, Walton's views were characterized as tantamount to total blasphemy and as proof positive that the lad was not only very strange, but also most assuredly not to be trusted.

All the while, however, it seemed clear that although Walton's critics no doubt understood that derogation was generally more marketable than praise, very few of them understood Walton. More often than not they readily offered their opinions without taking the trouble to get to know him and why he felt as he did.

As my thoughts returned to present time, the angular shadows cast on the river served notice that it was later than I had imagined. I gathered my belongings, gave Sigmund a pat on the head, and closed the door behind me.

While journeying home I concluded that, all of the reasons for the development of the controversy notwithstanding, the only pertinent issue at hand was whether or not Walton could retain his individuality and still play professional basketball as those who thought of him as among the best to ever set foot on a court knew that he could.

In order to remain loyal to his iconoclastic principles and at the same time function effectively as a part of the very establishment whose values he held in serious doubt, Bill Walton would have to skillfully guide himself along a precariously narrow path of action. Perhaps no other athlete had ever been confronted with a more perilous journey—but perhaps no other athlete had ever been better prepared for the trip.

EPILOGUE

Five days subsequent to my arrival home, headlines throughout the country named Jack and Micki Scott as the object of an FBI manhunt precipitated by the discovery of information indicating that the Scotts had allegedly transported Patty Hearst and friends back and forth across country, while at one juncture residing with the SLA members for a few months in a farmhouse near South Canaan, Pennsylvania. The hideaway was allegedly rented by Micki Scott.

The Scotts at this time were nowhere to be found. Walton finally submitted to questioning at Charles Garry's office and told FBI agents only that he knew nothing of the Scotts' whereabouts or any of their alleged activities.

Approximately a week later, I spoke to Bill on the phone and he informed me that, much to his chagrin, he was still being constantly harassed by federal agents.

Shortly thereafter, two gentlemen came calling for me at my Mill Valley residence. Both were cleanshaven with neatly shorn locks, and sported dark conservative business suits appropriately accompanied by narrow ties. Their greeting was felicitous and their manner obviously well practiced. When they advised me that they were with the FBI, it was as much a revelation as it would have been had the Archbishop of Canterbury, clad in full regalia, announced to me that he was with the clergy.

I felt certain that I could be in no way helpful, and I knew that, although few people are cognizant of the fact, it was perfectly within my rights to respectfully decline to be questioned. Nevertheless, when they asked if they could make a few inquiries, I invited them to proceed, since I had the distinct feeling that if I refused, I would cast suspicion upon myself (a supposition that the agents themselves would later corroborate by their assessment of Walton's conduct).

Although I had nothing to hide, I felt uncomfortable; for, in spite of the fact that they were both *extremely* polite, their very presence was sufficiently intimidating.

They of course knew that I had spent time with Walton at his home. I told them that, based on what I had read about the SLA and the violence associated with their actions, I would certainly not consider myself to be one of their sympathizers. I went on to say that at no time during my stay with Walton was Patty Hearst's name mentioned. I also stated that there was no discussion of the whereabouts of the Scotts.

It wasn't long before one of the agents, prefacing his remarks by saying, "Now I don't want you to think that we're trying to tell you what to do," went on to suggest that I return to Walton's home for the explicit purpose of obtaining "information that might be valuable to our investigation."

I was told that it could be well worth my while, since any such information would be paid for in cash "on a C.O.D. basis."

Unable to disguise the disbelief in my voice, I asked how much money they generally offered for substantive data obtained in that manner. They said the dollar figure was negotiable and largely contingent upon the nature of the information, but intimated it would be a healthy sum . . . "enough to pay the rent for a while."

The proposition left me totally incredulous. The only thing that seemed more thoroughly repugnant than the idea of surreptitiously using Walton's hospitality to act as a would-be paid informant was the thought of the federal government promoting such activity. Besides, I

Case No. R-027

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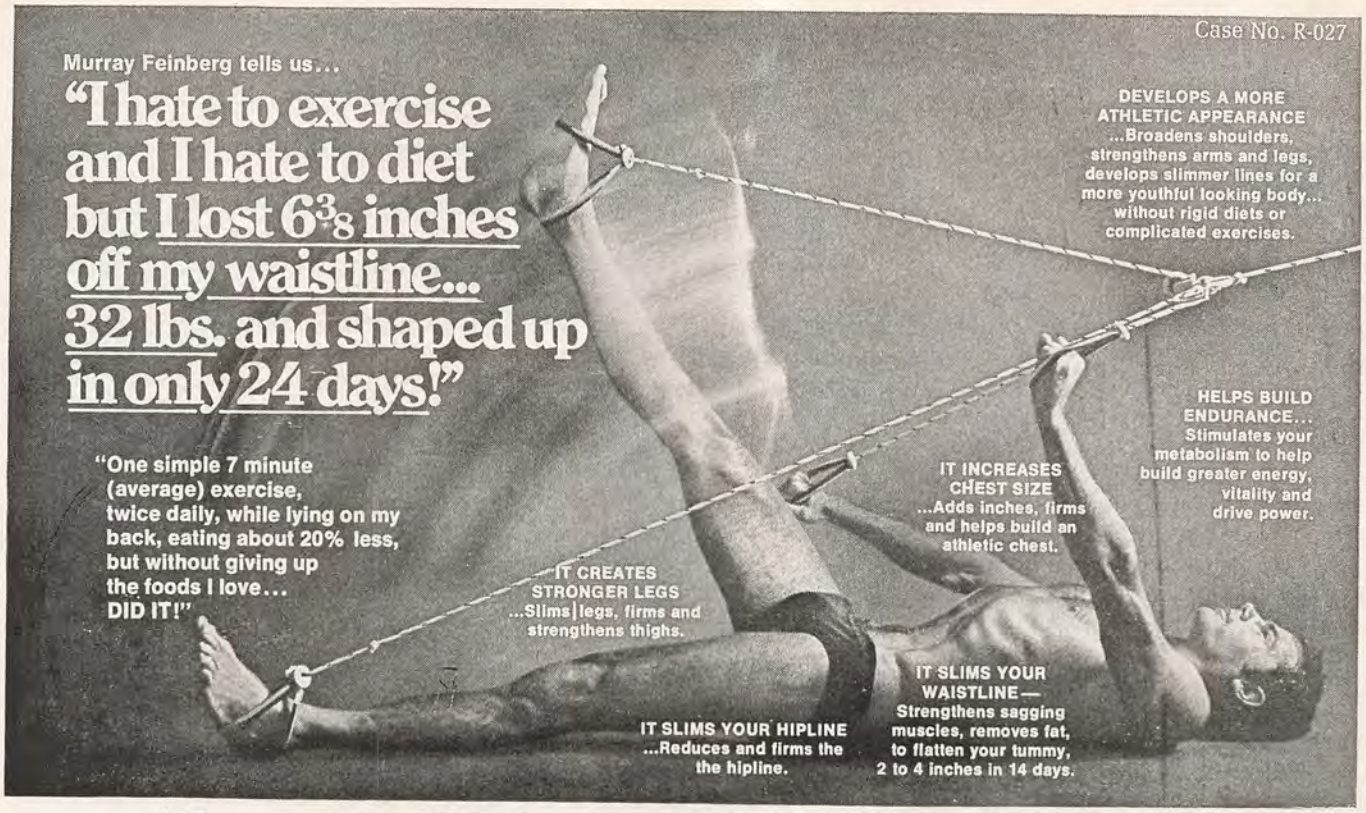
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Weight 278 lbs.
Waist 49½ in.

March 22
Weight 246 lbs.
Waist 43⅛ in.

Name	Pounds Lost	Inches Lost (off waistline)	Time
G. C.	25 lbs.	5¾ in.	(14 days)
M. F.	32 lbs.	6⅜ in.	(21 days)
W. E.	15 lbs.	3 in.	(14 days)
M. B.	22 lbs.	6 in.	(21 days)
C. J.	10 lbs.	6¾ in.	(14 days)
P. O.	10 lbs.	6¼ in.	(14 days)
J. C.	10 lbs.	5 in.	(14 days)

They were measured by experts before and after 14 days. The results verified, some notarized. Your results may vary depending on how overweight you are and how much time you devote to the exerciser. The customers quoted spent 5 to 10 minutes, twice daily and reduced their food intake —temporarily—by about 20%, but none gave up the foods they love.

DO IT NOW! It's America's most successful figure shaper. 600,000 customers have purchased our '5' Minute Plan to slim down fast. Results are proven and notarized. Our guarantee to you is in writing. Experts agree our plan works—and works fast. Now, can you think of any reason for not ordering your '5' Minute Body Shaper Plan and start slimming down today?

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"Use our improved '5' Minute Total Body Shaper Plan for 14 days! See what it can do for you! If it is not what we say it is, simply return it to us, in good condition, for your $9.95 refund."

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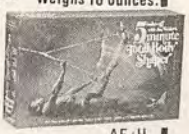

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would have thought that the FBI would seriously question the integrity of anyone who would comply with its requests only if paid to do so.

When I brought up this point, one of the agents quickly replied, "This isn't a *bribe*." It was all that I could do to keep from asking what euphemism he cared to use. He did, however, go on to explain his assertion. "We just want to let people like yourself, who are obviously unaware of the fact, know that there is money available for information that can be of use to us." Somehow I couldn't bring myself to believe that this was exactly what all those politicians had in mind when they said, "Your tax dollar is returned to you in so many different ways."

They then went on to ask why I felt that Walton, if he had nothing to hide, had been for the most part reluctant to speak with the Bureau and was generally uncooperative. I explained that I could only surmise that his behavior was attributable to the fact that he did not have a particularly high opinion of the FBI because he felt that federal agents had been badgering him, his family and his friends without just cause.

Feeling strangely audacious, I asked if they felt that it was completely necessary to interrogate so many people, the vast majority of whom were not at all familiar with the particulars of the situation in question. They responded that it was indeed, since, if they missed even one person, he or she might have been the one who could have provided the information needed to break the case. I suggested that if they pursued that form of logic it might be best for them to go door to door, thereby being absolutely secure in the knowledge that they missed no one. One of the agents remarked, "That might not be such a bad idea." With that, they informed me that it would "naturally" be necessary to question the people who rented the upper portion of the house in which I lived. They were implicated, of course, by virtue of their acquaintance with me. I didn't have to tell them their names—they knew them already.

The disconcerting tactics of the FBI preyed on my mind and led me to ponder the rationale for their actions long after the agents had departed.

Inasmuch as Patty Hearst and the other SLA members had allegedly committed some very serious crimes, the Bureau's effort to apprehend them was one which, in principle, I fully supported. It was the highly questionable manner in which the effort was being carried out that warranted an explanation.

Ominous as it may appear, the likelihood is that the unseemly conduct of the FBI was, as the agents themselves clearly indicated, nothing more than a product of Bureau policy. Then again, perhaps it was prompted in part by frustration and embarrassment over the fact that an extremely well-known 21-year-old girl and her cohorts had made what was reputedly the world's foremost crime detection agency appear utterly inept by managing to elude its clutches for well over a year.

Or perhaps it was in some way attributable to a loss of moral perspective resulting from the heated pitch of the investigation and the Bureau's desperate desire to try and save face by finally locating Patty.

Regardless of the reason, the fact of the matter is that the FBI investigatory process currently includes practices that are totally devoid of any semblance of ethical behavior. Some, like the proposition offered me, actively encourage deceit and avarice, while others show disregard for the rights of privacy guaranteed the citizenry by the fourth amendment.

But perhaps one of the most unsettling aspects of the entire episode was that the two agents who questioned me looked to be men of integrity, yet they had somehow been convinced that there was no fault to be found with Bureau procedures. They appeared to actually believe that all of the FBI policies that they carried out were completely above-board, perfectly within the bounds of good ethics, and more importantly, "essential to the investigation."

Two weeks later, after having been "underground" for well over a month, Jack and Micki Scott, accompanied by Walton, surfaced in San Francisco and spoke to the press. They accused the FBI of numerous transgressions including "bribery," "illegal wiretaps and mailcovers," and "harassment and intimidation."

Walton referred to the FBI as "the enemy," and made a statement in which he expressed the desire, "to urge the people of the world to stand with us (him and the Scotts) in our rejection of the United States government." He added a few days later that he had been referring to "the trends, practices and activities of the recent government," and not to the people of the United States or to the Constitution.

Walton's remarks, while undoubtedly inflammatory, were spoken by a young man who, having committed no crime, had been subjected to constant harassment and had been under continued surveillance, both legal and illegal, for months.

Yet the public reaction was one of righteous indignation. Portland citizens as well as others around the country vociferously aired their disapproval. Rumors of a trade and of disciplinary action by the NBA were widespread. The Trail Blazers issued a statement chastising Walton for his behavior. And, for what seemed like at least the one millionth time during Bill Walton's young life, the headlines read "Walton's Remarks Spark Storm of Controversy." Somehow you got the feeling that this time wouldn't be the last.

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